



# American Towns *and* People

Harrison Rhodes

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AMERICAN  
TOWNS *and* PEOPLE









The White House is a sort of National shrine.

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# American Towns and People

by Harrison Rhodes

Author of

"High Life," "The Flight to Eden," etc.

With Illustrations

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AMERICAN  
TOWNS *and* PEOPLE



## Why Is a Bostonian?

THE author of the "Rollo Books," famous in that dim nineteenth century, wrote also the familiar "Lucy" and "Jonas Books," and another series less well known but invaluable to the American who is curious-minded as to the social history of his country. *Marco Paul's Adventures in Pursuit of Knowledge* (is the title not indicative of the pretty, harmless wit of those innocent days?) is the record of an early attempt to "see America first." Marco Paul, after showing his native city of New York to the excellent Forrester, at once his cousin and his tutor, visited in that relative's company, and in a hot and praiseworthy pursuit of knowledge, Vermont, the Springfield Armory, the forests of Maine, Boston, and the Erie Canal! Agreeable though all the volumes are, it is with the one upon the capital of Massachusetts that we are here concerned, and in especial with the chapter describing the visit of our travelers to the Bunker Hill Monument.

"Who fought the battle on Bunker Hill?" Marco Paul asked his cousin Forrester. And

the author of the *Adventures*, who was, it is to be noted, a Bostonian, comments in this astonishing way upon the young hero's ignorance. "Marco Paul," he says, "was a New York boy and did not know much about the battle of Bunker Hill."

In 1843 the Revolution was not—one would now say—so very remote. The discovery is therefore the more significant that so long ago Boston was casting at New York the same reproach of being "un-American" over which recent writers upon our civilization have so often become philosophical. Even after more than three-quarters of a century this acidity of tone about poor Marco Paul seems, at the very outset, to warn off any New-Yorker preparing to comment upon Boston. Perhaps the only apology for recklessness is recklessness itself. But it can at least be hinted that nowadays few New-Yorkers are New-Yorkers; they are more commonly Ohioans.

Since the Bostonian attitude toward New York has, by the accident of Marco Paul's *faux pas* upon Bunker Hill, already been introduced, it may be as well to go on, and to say that their feeling concerning the metropolis, varying in quality and in emotional force, is one of the most curious and distinguishing marks of our other cities. Philadelphia, for example, ignores New York. Bos-

ton, on the other hand, is over-acutely conscious of it, hates it, despises it, loves its fleshpots and its Great White Way, and is ashamed of itself for doing so. All this, be it clearly understood, is said in praise rather than dispraise of Boston. But the facts are as they are. New York is perpetually upon Boston's nerves. To a foreign school-boy studying his atlas, Philadelphia would seem to be considerably nearer the mouth of the Hudson than Boston; spiritually, if one may put it that way, the New England capital is far closer at hand.

Until very recently it was possible to take a train from Boston to New York at a later hour than you could enter the subway and take a street-car for Cambridge—a fact which in the days before Harvard became a serious scholarly athletic college was often taken by belated and cheerful students of that institution as a sign direct from God. The development of what was known as the “brass-bed train” between the two cities was evidence of an almost exacerbated anxiety to make the night transit endurable to overwrought, quivering creatures returning to the shores of Massachusetts Bay. New York's tango roofs and pleasure palaces are the constant familiar haunt of Bostonians, yet it is never certain that the visitors are quite at their ease there.



Even for the larkish trip to New York they bring certain grave prejudices and scientific ideas as to hygiene, which look very odd when unpacked in Manhattan. A Bostonian lady who was enthusiastic over New York's dancing-in-public restaurants, asserting that at home it was difficult regularly to secure this excellent health-exercise, caused considerable confusion one New-Year's Eve in a place of entertainment where, for that evening, only champagne was being served to patrons, by insisting upon having "certified milk," which was, she stoutly maintained, the exact thing which could, without harming her, keep her going at three in the morning!

It is no bad thing to pass from the image of the blousy beauty of Manhattan to one of the more frugal, nipped loveliness of Boston. Of course, the New-Yorker might well feel terror on his arrival in Boston, especially if it is after nightfall, in that strange Back Bay station where the electric lamps seem to produce light without shedding it. He might reasonably fear that now justice is at last to be meted out to him. But when the first moment's panic is over he cannot but feel, as does doubtless the repatriate Bostonian, that the contrast is, for the time being at least, agreeable between what he has left and the cooler, grayer, more distinguished civiliza-

tion to which he has come. More distinguished, in the accurate sense of that word, Boston is. While the national metropolis is at once vehement and vague, the New England capital is more measured, more clean-cut, more distinguished in the sense of having somehow so concentrated and clarified its special flavor that no one can for a moment doubt that—for better or worse—Boston is Boston. When the sharp east wind has cleared away the vapors of Broadway, New York becomes less an actuality than a nightmare, and the northern town and its inhabitants are perceived to be standing very firmly on their own feet.

These northern folk are passionately Bostonian—if they are passionately anything. It is pleasant for a moment to think of the lady living in Milton (a town of concentrated Bostonianism) who said of her son, whose career in the diplomatic service of his country had kept him in Paris for several years, that her only fear was that he should “get out of touch with Milton”! There was no confusion in her mind as to what is valuable in life. In this matter of values and belief in Boston the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities presented itself lately to great advantage, gallantly going to the courts to prevent the alien—generally French-Canadian—

from changing his name by the ordinary legal processes to that of any of Boston's old, historic families. There is a something here that insists on being like the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. And yet there is also something magnificent—in a democracy—in the fact that you can become Smith, but never—shall we say Homans?

The intentions of this article—though honorable—are not topographical, yet something must be said of the look of Boston, for it is indicative of the town's inner quality—as indeed to any one who has a feeling for the personality of places is always the look of streets and squares and parks. New York sprawls; Boston really composes itself around Beacon Hill, and falls away from the lovely, peaceful, brick quarter which surrounds the State House to the business district and the foreign North End on one side, and on the other to the Back Bay, the great South End, the huge, trailing suburbs that lie farther out, and finally the New England country of which it is the metropolis and the commercial and spiritual head. Somehow all through the town one gets hints of the great tributary province. There is a little old shop near the busy center where are displayed in the window slippery elm and licorice sticks—does the sight not bring all New England's rocky fields and

white villages immediately before your eyes?

The State House is to the eye as to the imagination the center of New England, and its gilded dome rising over the dark-green of the elms on the Common is typical of the unexuberant, distinguished beauty of this Northern Athens. There is probably quite as much gold upon the dome as would be necessary to decorate a New York restaurant. But in the former case there is no vulgar ostentation in its use. There is not even the kind of warm, barbaric lavishness, which incrusts the Venetian St. Mark's with the precious metal. The Bostonian State House seems instead to proclaim that here in a shrewd, inclement climate and upon an arid, stony soil New England industry and thrift have won a living and even wealth, and that when the occasion reasonably and sanely demands it New England can be lavish, almost spendthrift. You get a sense everywhere in Boston that they spend money upon public enterprises like state houses, opera-houses, art museums, and so forth because there is a need to have such things and the money can be found, not because the money is there and there is a need to find some way to spend it—the latter being a much more characteristic American frame of mind. Reason rather than emotion guides New England expenditure, and the result is a cool and

restrained distinction which the wanton cities of the South and West never quite attain.

The old Boston dwellings upon Beacon Hill have this look of tempered luxury to perfection. But what is more remarkable is the sobriety of domestic architecture in the newer districts, even in that decorous Commonwealth Avenue, in which the true Bostonian so fantastically asks the stranger to detect a note of the vulgarity of the *nouveau riche*. The Louis's have never wrought much of their French mischief in the Back Bay. A certain indigenous ugliness of architecture is preferred, solid and roomy, suggesting comfort rather than slender, gilded elegance. There is not much foreign-lace nonsense at the windows; instead sometimes only simple, colored silk curtains drawn back to admit the sun and allow its due hygienic effect. Where the outlook is toward the south, plants flourish in the Bostonian windows, and the passer-by instinctively feels that they actually grow there, and may even be watered by the ladies of the house instead of being merely a temporary installation by some expensive florist, to be lavishly and immediately replaced when neglect has withered them.

The Bostonian interior, too, has something of this frugal quality, and may be recognized even in houses in the Middle West where the



In Scollay Square the old tradition is less in evidence,





influence of the summer upon the North Shore has chastened the exuberance of taste natural in those remoter regions. There is something extremely pleasant in these sunny, cleanly scoured, airy, rather scantily furnished rooms, with big expanses of polished floor and well-worn furniture. They seem a little old-fashioned now, but this is merely a proof that taste struck Boston in something like the '70's of the last century, a little before it hit our other towns.

There is, of course, a comic side to this frugality. One can imagine that in the early esthetic days the inexpensiveness of the jar of dried cattails was not without its appeal to the Bostonian decorator. No Bostonian thinks of spending his income; no New-Yorker thinks of spending merely his income: this is an exaggeration of something fundamentally true. The solid, piled-up, quiet wealth of Massachusetts is enormous—what the department-store experts call the “shopping power” of the regions within a forty-mile circle around the State House dome is some amazing proportion of the purchasing ability of the whole country. Yet Boston shops have never the air of inviting gay, wayward extravagance, the highest-priced ones are the least obtrusive, and the best always seem as if they could be instantly adapted to the sale of that tradi-



tional black silk of our grandmothers which could "stand alone."

Bostonian spending is the result of mature and deliberate thought. It is rarely vulgar, but it knows nothing of the spendthrift's *joie de vivre*. People in New York may dine at the Ritz from obscure motives of economy, a vague feeling that a holiday for the servants at home may make them more efficient at other times. In Boston they eat in restaurants, one somehow feels, only after fasting and prayer. The name given at once to the latest smart hotel, "The Costly-Pleasure," is significant. There is even something a little grim about the phrase; it is almost as if the costliness of pleasure repelled instead of allured, as it does in less serious towns. Young men in evening dress do not idly stroll forth into the Bostonian streets with their overcoats carelessly unbuttoned; it would give a false idea that a white-waistcoated Costly-Pleasure night-life is real Bostonianism. They hurry into motors and taxis and are about their business of dining and dancing seriously, almost half apologetically. There is, in short, very little bead on native Boston pleasure; it does not run to froth.

The job of being very young and very gay and very foolish is left to Harvard undergraduates. The proximity of a great supply of

young men with hearty appetites and strong dancing legs has made Boston fashion dependent and complaisant. The boys, in consequence, do all the things which gay young men do in light magazine fiction. They go to parties with a self-confident indifference as to whether they have been invited or not. And there is a pretty story of some lads bringing suit-cases from Cambridge, in which they packed bottles of champagne, thus transferring supplies to the groves of Academe after the ball. It is no idle boast of the enthusiastic advocates of Harvard education that youth there is more prepared to deal with the great world than are the students of a country college. The crimson thread of Harvard is woven into the very fabric of Bostonian existence; yet though it is perpetually there, it always seems exotic.

The Bostonian opera—now suspended—was beautifully Bostonian; it presented in agreeable clearness the indigenous social quality. The decoration of the house was quiet gray and gold, and the garb of the audience had on the whole something of the same sobriety. To this effect the native frugality doubtless contributed; on opera nights the streets leading to the edifice were thronged with intrepid women equipped to give battle to extravagance for music's sake, with galoshes

and woolen scarfs—in this rude Northern climate even “fascinators” must be woolen. If an Italian lady in evening dress could not afford a cab to the opera, she would quite simply stay at home—and yet we prate of the love of music nourished in those sunny climes! This tribute to ladies in fascinators is not to be taken as meaning that there were not more luxurious women—and plenty—in the stalls and boxes—lovely, carriage-borne creatures, expensively dressed and well jeweled, probably with the best old Brazilian stones; the point is that the total effect of the Bostonian audience was what it rarely is in opera-houses—subordinate to the stage.

The opening night was an incredible event. Banquet parties of the gayest Bostonians had gathered to dine at an hour when food would poison the fashionable people of other cities, and the crush of carriages was beyond everything ever known, not because more people were going to the opera than go in other cities, but because, for the first time in the history of opera, every one wanted to arrive on time. The intervals of the performance were devoted to a general promenade, in which many box-holders joined. Indeed, the attention paid to the occupants of boxes by the general audience was barely sufficient to induce female loveliness to display its charms in the

traditional entr'acte manner—the ladies, if the truth be told, excited about the same amount of admiration as did the silver-gilt soda-water fountain which had been installed in the foyer. Here, it seemed to the irreverent outsider, the last word had been said. To have linked opera with the nut-sundae is to have, once for all, domesticated the gay, wayward institution and made it Boston's harmless, admirable own.

Light-minded comment, however, never discloses more than one side of a medal. The Bostonian opera showed, as a matter of fact, an admirable and sane sense of proportion. It was not the London, the Paris, or the New York opera. Why, pray, should it have been? It was opera of exactly the size and sumptuousness which it was likely that a town of Boston's extent and wealth could afford. It seemed something which could reasonably hope to exist, not the product of a spasmodic, hysterical effort such as occasionally brings fabulously paid singers to some of our smaller cities for a feverish May Festival or special operatic week. It was not a provincial enterprise, because it was not aping any metropolis. It was the opera of the capital of New England, and it stood firmly, like many other neighboring institutions, upon its own sturdy, galoshed, Bostonian feet. It may, of course,

always be open to question whether operatic art is not a too essentially artificial and emotional blend ever to please the Bostonian public as does the classically severe fare offered in Symphony Hall. But the Huntington Avenue opera was meant to stand or fall by the genuine music-loving support of its public. Even if the operatic dose was bitter, it was to be disguised by no "diamond horseshoe," by no soft Ionian ways. And who shall say that, though now suspended, the Boston opera has not had its nation-wide effect? Has not its gifted scene-painter already been chosen by New York to do the decorations for its leading summer "girl-show," and does he not thus continue to enliven Boston?

Culture has always seemed to the outsider a little rigorous in Boston. But as one looks over the whole field of American life one is inclined to say that desperate situations demand desperate remedies, and that to have caught culture in any trap, even just to have got it fighting in a corner, is an achievement.

This is not altogether a question of art, though art is no doubt one of the town's chief preoccupations. Still less is it a question of producing art. It is no great reproach to Boston that it is nowadays more a center of appreciation than creation. There is here no question of where the divine afflatus blows most

fiercely. New York is the mart, and that is about all there is to be said upon an already threadbare subject.

Culture has, perhaps, more to do with education than with art. We study enough in America—that is, we go to schools and colleges—but somehow, it may as well be admitted frankly, we do not succeed in weaving our education into the very fabric of our daily social intercourse; we are not cultivated in the unobtrusive, easy way of the best Englishmen and Frenchmen. Now the newspaper humorists' best jokes hinge upon the alleged universality of Boston culture. And though the alien visitor may never find the infant who spouts Greek while brandishing his rattle, he will in simple justice admit that education has gone both far and deep in Boston, that slang is not the only dialect spoken, and that even among shop-girls and elevator-boys some traces of our original national speech are still to be detected.

Here, parenthetically, it may be said that what is meant by Bostonians speaking English is the words themselves rather than the intonation and pronunciation with which they are uttered. The "Boston accent" is of course famous and cannot but fail to give the keenest pleasure to even a child traveling thither. The point to be made here is that it does not,

as the Bostonians appear to think, approximate to the English accent of England any more than any other of our national accents. The total elision of the R and the amazing broad, flat A—as in “Park Street” and “Harvard College”—give to Bostonian speech a magnificently indigenous tang, hint at juniper and spruce forests and rocky fields and pumpkins and Thanksgiving and pie; make you feel again how triumphantly New England is new, and not old, English. But its vocabulary is, on the whole, the best chosen of all the American dialects.

It is somewhat difficult to find in ordinary Bostonian speech the ten- and twelve-syllabled words of which it is popularly supposed to be exclusively composed. But the joke is so old that there must be something in it. As far back as Brook Farm it was alleged that they said, “Cut the pie from the center to the periphery,” and asked, “Is the butter within your sphere of influence?” But this was humor, as New England as a wintergreen lozenge. It was a by-product of an unashamed passion for education which distinguished American antebellum days. Even in the Middle West, when James Garfield, later to be President, with his friends in the little fresh-water college of Hiram, indulged in “stilting,” as they termed this humorous riding of the high-



horses of the language, they were in the Bostonian tradition. "Stilting" has perhaps disappeared. But there are here and there indications of the survival of the English of a robust period. The old lady who said that she didn't, after all, know that Bostonians were so "thundering pious," produced with the phrase all the effect of an Elizabethan oath. She made you feel that Bostonian culture was no mere thin affair of yesterday.

It should be acknowledged handsomely that there is a certain amenity of tone in the town which comes not so much from exuberant good nature as from a reasoned belief in life's higher interests. The policeman who in Commonwealth Avenue used to stop promenading strangers and urge them to turn and admire the sunset was extending the city's hospitality no less to nature's beauty than to the visitors. He was notably Bostonian in that he was ashamed neither of the sunset nor of his belief that pleasure was to be derived from its contemplation. His culture was genuinely a part of his existence, of his everyday life. And culture is unquestionably a more integral part of Boston's normal existence than of our other cities' lives. Only in Boston, to imagine a concrete and pleasing example, could a lady, if she were so inclined, be distinguished by a love for extreme *décolletage* and for early

Buddhistic philosophy. There is, in Boston, nothing essentially inharmonious in such a combination.

In any case, variations from a standard type are not so severely penalized in Boston as in other parts of our country. Eccentricity is almost encouraged; to take but one example, old age is openly, almost brazenly, permitted. Just how they kill the old off in New York is not known, but they get rid of them somehow. Boston, on the contrary, has famous old people, especially old ladies, and the community's pride in them is not merely that they have been able so long to withstand the Boston climate. These veterans do not eat their evening meal up-stairs on a tray; instead, their visit to a dinner-table honors and enlivens the board. There is something extraordinarily exciting in meeting the lady whose witticisms were famous when you were almost a child and finding her still tossing them off so vigorously and gayly that you can with a clear conscience encourage your own children to grow up with the promise that when they are old enough to dine out they, too, shall be privileged to go to Boston and hear really good talk.

The New England capital cherishes affectionately links with the past. There was until lately for some favored people the possi-

bility of going to tea in a faded, old-fashioned Boston drawing-room, from the windows of which you saw the sunset across the Charles River basin, and hearing wise, graceful, tender talk that made the literary past of England and America for almost three-quarters of a century seem like the pleasant gossip of to-day. The delight of such moments in the fading light was poignant—the tears would come into one's eyes at the realization that it was all too good to be true and also too good to last.

The respect for the person or the thing which has become "an institution" is always to be noted with interest in our American life. And for an evening newspaper—a vulgar and fly-blown thing elsewhere—to have a half-sacred character is possible only in Boston. The publication in question is not thought of as a mere private enterprise; it is integrally a part of the whole community's life, its policy and its grammar are both constant matters for the searchings of the New England conscience. It is even solemnly asserted—by those who should know—that more Bostonians die on Friday than on any other day because they thus make sure of being in the special Saturday night obituary notices! To pay, even in the date of death, such a tribute to the Bostonian tradition is magnificent.

But if one is to speak of institutions, there is of course Harvard College, without which it is impossible to imagine Boston and Boston culture. Changes in Cambridge are changes in Boston. For a ten or twenty year period there has been a determined and conscientious attempt across the Charles to break down the old barriers and traditions which kept Harvard from being democratic and efficient in the modern way. What has been accomplished in Cambridge is for the purposes of this article less important than what has been wrought in Boston. Undergraduates may take innovation lightly, but in the fastnesses of clubs upon Beacon Hill irate old gentlemen declare that Harvard is now nothing but a "slap-shoulder college," and younger philosophers of a more suavely cynical turn of mind deplore the out-Yaleing of Yale, and the rough, boyish virility, wholly unconnected with education, which, they maintain, now distinguishes Cambridge rather than New Haven. They tell you that "college spirit," with all its attendant vulgarities of tone, is rampant where the college elms once stood, and there are no longer any disloyal sons of Harvard. This is the pleasant, crabbed, characteristic way in which Boston tells you that, after all, it is moving with the times, and that if a big, regenerative movement as some be-

lieve is sweeping over the country, it will have Harvard men in the very first battle-line. Boston may bewail changes in the nation, but it knows they cannot happen without changes in Harvard. Centuries of history prove it.

These centuries of history are singularly alive in Boston. The reference is not to Faneuil Hall or the Old South Church or any of the historic spots about which our modern Marco Pauls from Michigan and Oregon know so much. What is meant is the amazing sense of a continuous social connection back to the very English roots of the New England tree.

An unwise stranger, sitting at ease in a Bostonian club one day, ventured the observation, not deeply original or stimulating, that Boston was remarkable for the way in which the old Bostonian families had kept the money and the position and were still, as it were, in the saddle. The Bostonians looked at one another. They murmured a negative, and the faintest trace of embarrassment seemed to creep over the group. The confused stranger was so sure that his remark, if banal, was true that he thought they had not understood. He carefully explained again. The negative was now sharper and the embarrassment deeper.

"I don't think you quite understand—" began one of the Bostonians; and it is possible

that the miserable stranger might have tried to explain still again had not his friend gone on:

"You see, there are almost no Bostonians living here;"—he paused for an instant—"almost all the Bostonian families went back home at the time of the Revolution. The inhabitants here now, with the exception of perhaps four families, are all Salem people!"

There is no way of commenting upon such an episode; there it is, in sheer Bostonian beauty, for such as are worthy of seeing its Bostonianism. The tormented un-Bostonian mind will possibly seek refuge in the thought of the club itself. (One does not say clubs, although it is just possible to maintain that there are two in Boston.) Its grave, suave distinction can only be savored by many visits and by quiet, meditative hours. But once you have felt its charm you will henceforth find the ordinary American organization more like a hotel or a railway station than like a club. To sign no checks, but instead to receive an unobtrusive and unitemized bill at the end of the month, is at once to gain the impression that you are being notably treated like a gentleman. The impression is deepened by genuine blue Canton ware, by waiters of a dignified and ancient kindness which has elsewhere disappeared from American life, and



A street-corner seeker after truth.





by food excellent in that strange, tempered New England way—oysters from the club's own planted waters, and peppers and pepper sauces dated and labeled like vintage wines.

The right to belong to such a club is, as it were, beyond the power of the mere individual to acquire—it is something with or without which he is born. The club, indeed, has been described as an "Institution for the Congenitally Eminent." But within its doors you catch furtive hints of an inaccessible inner eminence—caused possibly by Bostonian instead of Salem descent—which makes even its exclusiveness seem common. There is a fabulous story of an eighth-degree Bostonian who referred lightly to his rare visits to this holy of club holies, of which he was, as it were automatically, a member, and said that it was "at times a pleasure to be *franchement canaille*." In this wind-swept Northern clime the phrase in the French language somehow seems to accentuate the odd, bitter, cultivated venom of a description of the greatest Bostonian exclusiveness as "frankly of the gutter." Let Ohio and Oklahoma pause and think before they too quickly describe our American civilization as twentieth-century democracy.

Bostonian democracy is not the spontaneous product of naturally genial temperaments;

it is rather a thing extorted from oneself by will and fierce conviction. But will, belief, and a conscience can make the Northern city burst into flames. In Boston least of anywhere in the North does the passion for human freedom which brought on our own Civil War seem a dead or forgotten thing. And even now the black brother—though modern thought judges him to be not quite a brother in the old sense—can still count on a helping hand and some belief in his future. It is well for the visitor to Boston to sit for a peaceful half-hour under the elms of the Common and think of New England's part in the national life. Geographically and spiritually New England is a little apart. It is a tight, small province, and it is a long way from there to Washington in ordinary times. It is in the crises that Boston becomes most intensely American; then you realize how far-flung is the battle-line of the New England conscience. One never quite forgets in Boston the great moments in our history when the country has kindled at New England's burning heart.

Modern workers, who believe that charity and good deeds begin at home, sometimes scoff at the Bostonian "long-distance philanthropy." And they cite you the story of the lady found wildly weeping because she had just heard how cruel they were to cats in Per-

sia in the thirteenth century! She is indeed a shade fantastical, poor lady; but in the monotonous dead levels of American life we can be grateful to Boston for her.

Indeed, is not gratitude, after all, the chief feeling one has for Boston? Nipped and sour though the fruit sometimes may be of the tree which grows upon her thin soil in her bitter east wind, does not every descendant of the old American stock, and every one who has in his Americanization made the traditions of that stock his own, know that the core of that fruit is sound, and the cider that might be pressed from it the best of our native wines, if one may put it that way? The packed trains that carry Thanksgiving travelers to Boston seem somehow symbolic. The statistics are not at hand—when are statistics ever at hand when they are needed?—but it must be that these trains are more heavily freighted than those that go to any other of our great American cities. Whether we are from New England or not, Boston is for many of us, in a deeper sense, our “home town.”



## Who Is a Philadelphian?

A STRANGER recently in Philadelphia on business bethought himself, in his friendless state, of a one-time casual acquaintance who had given as his address a Philadelphia club. From his hotel the visitor telephoned the club and asked if he might speak with Mr. John Doe. The telephone-clerk asked the inquirer's name, and after a decent interval replied that Mr. Doe was not in the club. The inquiry was then made whether Mr. Doe was in town and likely to be reached by a note sent to the club. The clerk politely regretted that he was not allowed to give any such information concerning a member of the club. The visitor protested, and was finally allowed to speak to the secretary's office. He gave his name again and, in answer to what seemed an odd query, that of his hotel. He explained that the shortness of his stay in Philadelphia was the reason of his anxiety to know whether he was likely to get hold of Mr. Doe during it or not. The secretary also politely regretted his inability so to violate the privacy of any member's life. The visitor,

now vaguely feeling that he was being treated like a dun or a detective, protested in slight exasperation that his designs upon Mr. Doe were honorable and purely social—that indeed he felt so sure of Mr. Doe's desire to welcome him to Philadelphia as to be inclined to insist upon some disclosure of even a club-member's whereabouts. The secretary now grew the least bit weaker, moved either by an inner kindliness or by some note of social authority in the visitor's voice, and at last grudgingly said that although the rules of the club were perfectly clear upon the point, he would as a courtesy consult one or two members of the board of governors who happened at that moment to be in the smoking-room. There was again a decent if tedious interval, and the secretary's voice was once more heard. He reiterated that it was contrary to the rules of the club to give information as to the whereabouts of any member, but that it had been decided that, in this special case, an exception might be made. He was pleased to inform the visitor that Mr. John Doe had died in December of the preceding year!

The first comment to be made upon this authentic anecdote is that, in spite of the secretary's courteous pretense, the rules of the club were *not* violated by the disclosure of a member's whereabouts, since the inquirer after Mr.



John Doe was still left, theologically speaking, with a choice between two possible addresses. The second observation, perhaps more profoundly significant, is that death scarcely increases the inaccessibility of a well-born Philadelphian.

The tradition of exclusiveness is one of the most striking features of the Philadelphian picture. And if this exclusiveness, which keeps the well-born safely apart from the not-well-born, makes it difficult for even a Philadelphian to know Philadelphia, how much more nearly impossible does it render such a task for the un-Philadelphian, who must depend upon occasional visits and casual gossip for his information. However genial Philadelphian hospitality may have been, the stranger will find that whatever "set" he may be in, it is, as it were, the wrong set for any general survey of the great town. The alien must frankly preface his impressions of Philadelphia and its people with a confession of foredoomed ignorance of his subject.

Long our second largest city, and even now our third, Philadelphia is nevertheless, in the strangest fashion, for most Americans a *terra incognita*. It is conveniently situated, and yet, almost symbolically, the through trains run round it and not into it. It makes no effort to attract the stranger. It advertises no historic

attractions, it sets no Broadway ablaze, it beats no tom-toms. Of all our American towns it is the most self-contained. It has almost none of our traditional eagerness for and sensitiveness to criticism. There is in it nothing of the hurrah-boys' braggadocio which so often marks our American "civic spirit." Philadelphia does not assert that it is in any way an admirable town; it merely feels that Philadelphia exists, always has existed, and always will exist, and that in a confused, tumultuous, and vulgar world this is the one uncontrovertible fact, the one solid rock where there is a sure foothold.

The true Philadelphian neither admires nor dislikes New York; he simply does not know that New York exists. The great lady who managed with difficulty to remember the metropolis as "the place where one goes to take the steamer for Europe" was expressing with a conscious, satirical exaggeration the actual Philadelphian feeling. And a pretty, morocco-bound set of address-books, purchased lately at the best Philadelphia stationer's, gives a charming concreteness to this same point of view; the three little volumes are labeled "Philadelphia," "London," and "Paris"—this is the world as Philadelphia sees it!

Though the social recognition thus grace-

fully extended to London and Paris is denied to Boston and New York, it might possibly be granted to the ancient aristocracy of the South. You feel instinctively that lovely, proud, faded Carolinian Charleston is perhaps the only American town with which Philadelphia would feel at ease. Her St. Cecilia Ball might rank with the Philadelphia Assemblies of an earlier, happier day, before Pittsburg and North Broad Street had fought their way into the once sacred lists. And it is pleasant upon investigation to discover corroborative traces of an agreeable earlier connection. The Philadelphia Club is domiciled in the stately old mansion which a rich Charlestonian built that he might pass the winter seasons in the Northern city, and the famous Madeira which bears his name is offered you in the houses where the Philadelphian tradition still beautifully lingers. You have only to try vainly to imagine this gentleman of the old régime settling upon the Bostonian Beacon Hill to realize how far toward the South the Pennsylvanian metropolis lies.

Indeed, the Southern note in Philadelphia is unmistakable. It is to be found in the spacious look of the old houses, and in a certain lavishness of architectural design in the public edifices of Colonial days. Independence Hall is sumptuous; you have only to compare

it with Boston's Old State House and its frugal, chastened beauty to realize that Philadelphia is by comparison a rich, care-free city upon a fat Southern soil. This softer note is to be found, too, in the gay chatter of the Philadelphian ladies, and in the pleasant presence of a well-mannered black population, and a generous, fat cuisine. The local darky has the look of having been established for generations by the Schuylkill, and of having devoted a great deal of that time to the preparation of terrapin and the decanting of vintage wines. He concerns himself naturally with food. In the eighteen-forties, when dashing resorts known as "oyster-cellars" were introduced, it is to be noted that the proprietors were blacks. And even now the caterer who has, as it were, the inherited right to direct the entertainments of the real Philadelphians is an ancient, white-haired gentleman of color.

Food is always the fashion in Philadelphia. The Philadelphian air is everywhere redolent of good living; even the stranger arriving at the railway station instinctively thinks of the nearest good restaurant and the next meal. It is true that Benjamin Franklin, who is almost tutelary in Philadelphia, proudly said, "My friends, any one who can subsist upon sawdust pudding and water, as I can, needs no man's patronage," and it is possible that the

philosophical gentlemen who still meet in his quaint old red-brick house, far down-town, may be nourished by some such sparse diet, as dry as their discussions. But, in spite of Dr. Franklin, nowhere else in the country is good eating so ancient and stately a tradition. Nowadays, of course, all our grill-roomed towns struggle for a culinary standing, but it is well to remember darker national days; a Philadelphian writer in the early part of the last century tells of barbarous regions of America where a favorite dish was sausage stewed in chocolate! Against such gastro-nomic abominations Philadelphia has through the years stood firm. To-day the proudest hostesses of America have their terrapin brought from Philadelphia. Even the metropolis, greedy and luxurious at table, speaks with bated breath of the feasts of Lucullus spread by the Delaware; it is left for Baltimore, sitting in the profusion of tribute which her great bay of Chesapeake pours upon her, alone to dispute culinary preëminence. Tradesmen throughout the country recommend their establishments as "Philadelphia Markets," while "Philadelphia Chickens" and "Philadelphia Ice Cream" are terms used as a guarantee of excellence and richness. Marketing is a serious affair where eating is serious; it is not so long ago that the most dig-

nified Philadelphian gentlemen, top-hatted heads of households, themselves accompanied the market-basket on its morning round.

With the alarming increase of non-alcoholism in the country, it has of course become possible nowadays to speak in praise of a rich, groaning, and teetotal table. But the Philadelphia epicure has not yet moved the whole distance with the times. The bouquet of Madeira still lingers faintly around the local mahogany tree. At the "English Rooms" in Funchal—as the club there is quaintly called—it was until 1918 a matter of serious discussion whether the taste for the island's wine would ever revive in Philadelphia or was slowly dying. Almost anywhere else in the world such talk would have seemed like a labored reconstruction of the eighteenth century; even in Philadelphia itself the courteous ceremonies of Madeira-drinking have always something of autumn's loveliness about them; you feel that such customs must with the years pass—if, indeed, anything can quite pass in Philadelphia.

There has been no Madeira since 1861, so the pink-faced, white-haired gentlemen of the old school tell you; and since you cannot lay down vintages and thus continue your cellar, it is small wonder that a pretty taste in wine is becoming rarer. But here and there in the



An early morning rite.





old houses famous old wines, with labels written in a cramped, old-fashioned hand hung upon the bottles, are still put upon the table after dinner, and stories are told of famous old gentlemen who could by tasting tell nine out of eleven strains of wine which had gone into a blend. In such mellow atmosphere the years seem to slip quietly back, and even the outer barbarian catches something of the Philadelphian content—a little of the Philadelphian feeling that the world outside Philadelphia must be an odd place into which it could be neither very safe nor very pleasant to venture; that when the right Madeira is upon the sideboard, the fire and candles lit and the curtains drawn, that outer world is a world well lost.

The traditions of the Philadelphian cuisine are not only preserved around the sacred kitchen-ranges of the best families, but are kept up by various public organizations ostensibly devoted to other purposes. There is something suggestive of the banquets of the London City Companies in the dinners, for example, of the Philadelphian insurance companies. And pleasant customs have grown up through the long Philadelphian years. The insurance company which is popularly and prettily called "The Green Tree" was dining—and dining well—when the news came of

the death of Washington, and to this day a toast to his memory is drunk each month by the assembled company.

In Philadelphia one is not displeased that even the memory of the first President is fragrant of good cooking. The memoirs of the days when the town was the nation's capital are very considerably concerned with Mr. Washington's dinners, served at four precisely, at a table decorated with silver salvers and alabaster mythological figures two feet high!

There are in Philadelphia various social and club organizations devoted almost exclusively to culinary aims. At one of these a dinner cooked by the members themselves is the greatest tribute which can be paid to a lovely lady visiting the city. And the "Fishing Company on the Schuylkill," now compelled by the pollution of that once limpid stream to eat fish only, not to catch them, is a historic institution, no mere club. Most of us remember some blithe collegiate indiscretion, committed under the influence of "Fish-house Punch." But not all know the pleasant history of the organization from which the beverage takes its name, which has so long existed with almost extra-territorial rights, a corporation vying in pride and dignity with the commonwealth of Pennsylvania itself. There is an incredibly fat and serious volume

giving the annals of the Fish-house through the long, peaceful Philadelphian years. Reading it, you are not surprised at the serious way in which membership in such an institution is regarded. There is a period of novitiate, during which Fish-housers-to-be must humbly appear at a certain number of fixed feastings of the company—a genuine Philadelphian scandal of a year or so ago was of a wayward young gentleman who, having started round the world, brazenly refused to come back to the Schuylkill from Cochin China to attend a yearly fish-eating, and thus lost the membership which would have been the crown of steadier and maturer years.

Here is an admirable example of Philadelphian valuations; until you can see the boy's behavior as criminal folly you are unqualified for any profitable study of the Philadelphian social structure. However fantastic the local customs or prejudices may seem to the stranger, they are genuine to the native.

A famous and agreeable example of Philadelphianism is the geographical restrictions as to the district where polite life may be led; you may search the world without finding anything comparable to the feeling in Philadelphia concerning the regions north of Market Street. To the dweller in the permitted quarter of "Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce, and

Pine" Streets, the mere existence of creatures in that outer darkness seems incredible—with the one curious exception to be noted, that if you belong to certain old Quaker families you may live in Arch Street, just over the border. Otherwise the northern districts might be desert land where a colony of rich lepers have built their palatial marble huts. When the Philadelphian opera was transferred from the delightful old red-brick Academy to the vulgar new structure in North Broad Street there were gallant ladies of the old school who swore roundly they would never attend it, and high-bred creatures who, though weak enough to go to the opening performance, nevertheless fainted away as they, for the first time in their lives, crossed Market Street and breathed this vile new air.

There is an apocryphal story of a delightful and famous old lady who had seen here and there at afternoon parties a younger woman whose look somehow seemed to win friendliness. Finding herself one day descending some of the best white-marble door-steps in company with this agreeable stranger, the elder lady suggested driving her home, and they stepped together into the snug brougham, drawn by a sleek, fat horse, and driven by an equally sleek, fat coachman.

"James, we will drive Mrs. X home," was the only order given.

The brougham started, and for a period, while its occupants chatted pleasantly, wandered somewhat aimlessly through the very best streets. At last its owner, vaguely disturbed, said, apologetically:

"I am afraid James doesn't know where you live. It is annoying; he always knows where everybody lives. I apologize for having to ask such a question, but where *do* you live, my dear?"

Her charming companion smiled, and then mentioned a number in North Broad Street—it may even have been Spring Garden Street—an address in the unmentionable regions. The Philadelphian—for we can no longer so designate the younger woman—took the blow gallantly. The pleasant chat was resumed, but for at least a quarter of an hour more the sleek, fat horse still ambled aimlessly through the very best district. At last the elder lady rose to the situation. She tapped the glass, and, as the sleek, fat coachman halted, said:

"I wonder if you would mind telling James yourself where to drive us, dear? I'm afraid he would think it very odd if I myself were to give him an address north of Market Street!"

The one thing unforgivable in Philadelphia is to be new, to be different from what has been. North Broad Street, for example, may be in every way a better place to live in than Walnut Street, but no one has ever lived there. Hence, no one ever can. The Philadelphian likes to know what to expect; novelty disturbs his contentment, ruffles him. A "society circus," for example, was suggested a few years ago, but given up. "It would be extremely amusing" was the dictum of a social arbiter, "but it would be too new to please Philadelphia."

A lady once asked why it was that she always saw just the same people at the windows of a certain club. "People! Those are not people," was the gravely ironic reply. "They are painted on the glass of the windows!" It is even possible to imagine this an ideal arrangement for a Philadelphia club—that as young men attain the age at which they come into their congenital right to sit at windows the club artist should install their portraits in correct and easy attitudes.

Of course, the look of the town has perforce changed somewhat with the years; near the center Chicagoesque buildings rudely scrape the serene, exclusive Philadelphian sky. But there are streets and squares in plenty where old red-brick houses with white-marble steps



keep affectionate hold upon the past. Only lately some of the quieter byways were utilized by moving-picture actors for a drama of London life—a most authentic proof of the continuity of the English tradition. Is it fantastic to wonder if the day may not soon be here when the British “movies” themselves will be forced to go to Philadelphia to find London streets, unchanged and unvexed by modernization? The link with the Colonial days is never obtrusive in Philadelphia (nothing is obtrusive there), but you can still find elderly people who speak of the voyage westward from England as “going out” to America. Only this year a negro bootblack in a barber-shop spoke of a gentleman’s silk hat as a “beaver”! And a mere débutante, a child in white tulle, enthusiastically pro-Allies and pro-English, said this winter that she hoped people now saw what a mistake they made in 1776!

The only thing that can wholly go out of existence in Philadelphia is Philadelphia itself—if one may venture on paradox. This, some pessimists say, is happening in the tremendous exodus to country homes in the fat, well-groomed country that lies correctly along the Main Line. The trolley-cars have made the narrow old streets of the town pandemonium. But the motor arrived just in the

nick of time to keep country life from being really country life. These so-called country people think nothing of driving twenty miles to town to dine and dance. So, for the time being at least, it is only as if Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce, and Pine Streets had been extended into the lovely green suburbs. There their solid elegance and their grave decorum still hold sway, and Philadelphia is still Philadelphia.

Not even youth prevents a Philadelphian's being Philadelphian. It was a gay young dog who commented upon a painting exhibited at the academy: "I don't think it is worth much as a portrait. No Philadelphian ever sat with her legs crossed." And here may be considered boards of censors of moving pictures, the newest and most ridiculous gauges of public morality. It is significant that a hero who in other towns had roguishly put a wet head from between the curtains of a shower-bath was not permitted to do so before Philadelphian audiences. The example is taken at random out of probable hundreds. The point is that the note of Philadelphian decorum is strongly struck.

But Philadelphian decorum requires explanation. It derives, of course, partly from the Quaker tradition. But even in the eighteenth-century days there were what were

quaintly called "Wet Quakers," ladies who wickedly wore laces and ribands. And as to Church-of-England circles, it is well to remember that the funds for the lovely steeple of Christ Church were the product of lotteries. Even now the town has, as it were, the paradoxical reputation of being both fast and slow. Its inner circles are understood to be committed to friskiness and agreeable devilments of all kinds. But it is also understood that all this liveliness must be kept, as it were, in the family. Misconduct of all descriptions is quite permissible, but only among the well-born and in the hallowed privacy of the home.

There is, of course, a certain amount of publicity even in the best Philadelphian lives. *Noblesse oblige*. It is, for example, the fashion to sip and dance on "opera night" at the restaurant of the newest and smartest hotel. But the care with which the tables are assigned to the well-born, and the decorous, gilded elegance of the whole scene, rob the occasion of that welcome vulgarity which elsewhere in the world makes restaurants preferred to homes.

Whatever may be the vivacity of small, discreet parties given for well-seasoned women of the world, the great balls are always for *débutantes*, to honor sweet, girlish life in white muslin and blue ribbons. Here

again the "Southern note" is evident. It is true that often these innocently aimed functions are done upon a scale of splendor which recalls Imperial Rome. To celebrate the entrance of a young Philadelphian maiden into society orchids bloom, tropic birds warble in expensive jungles, and rare butterflies are released to flutter through one mad night. Such events, duly recorded in the nation's press, are public testimony to the city's wealth, its ability to compete in magnificence and lavishness with the wanton metropolis itself. But having occasionally during the winter season thus combined civic duty with pleasure, Philadelphian liveliness resumes its deep, dark flow.

The natural result of this guarding of gayety like a sacred flame is the Sabbath calm which both traditionally and actually broods over the great city. For the stranger this is most to be noted in the deserted evening streets. Philadelphians will promenade no nocturnal sidewalks. When they venture forth to places of entertainment they scurry as if to cover; and if, upon the return, they stop for supper, they take to restaurants as to the trenches. The town, in short, does not approve of darkness—it would take a midnight sun to make midnight popular in Philadelphia.

Perhaps the most significant thing about the one great Philadelphian revel, the New Year's

"Mummers' Parade," is that it takes place at eight in the morning! Elsewhere in the country exhausted millions are still faint and wan from the pleasures of the night before, but Philadelphia, having already passed the night in revels, goes forth like a somewhat dissipated lark to celebrate a festival of Dionysos at the crack of dawn. Between eight and nine thousand take part, members of various Mummers' clubs, "Silver Crown," "Lobster," "Charles Klein," "Sauerkraut Band," "D. D. Oswald," "Zuzu," "Jack Rose Accordion Band," and a dozen other as fantastically named organizations. The amount spent on rich and elaborate costumes runs into the hundreds of thousands. The result is a popular rejoicing both spontaneous and gay. This year the railways began to advertise it, and ran special trains even from New York for it. But even so, it is still true, broadly speaking, that no one outside of Philadelphia has ever heard of it. Why, pray, should any one? Philadelphia would ask. This obscurity is the Philadelphianishness of it—unless you can here also vaguely discern some philosophic truth concerning the wild follies of a quiet community, once the bridle is loosed.

Of course, in so great a population there are a certain number of graceless pleasure-seekers. But in spite of them public amusements

languish. The characteristic aspect of a Philadelphia theater is gloom until the end of the week comes, when the whole town with its wife or its best girl goes forth for a traditional Saturday night's pleasure. Until then the home holds undisputed sway.

Indeed, the Philadelphian boasts, or confesses, if you prefer the word, that his is a "city of homes." And the "homes" look very snug, very homelike indeed, especially at dusk as one strolls through the red-brick streets and sees the lamps lit and the curtains drawn upon comfortable, old-fashioned rooms. But the impertinent curiosity of the un-Philadelphian insists on wondering what a Philadelphian home, more accurately and spiritually, is. Is it, for example, devoted to the carpet slipper and the good book? Or is it a center from which radiate moral forces making for private or public virtue? The foreign observer must reluctantly confess that neither literary and artistic culture nor a high civic standard seems very obviously to be the characteristic Philadelphian note. If people read books in those comfortable homes by those pleasant fire-sides, you somehow suspect that they fall asleep over them. There is, of course, nothing low-bred about Philadelphian ignorance; it is rather like the gay, courteous lack of education which distinguishes the South. Every

one who is any one has learned what might be termed the necessary elegancies—as one learns good table-manners. And it is quite possible that Shakespeare and Jane Austen—to choose at random—may be better known in Philadelphia than anywhere else in the country. But passionate and omnivorous general reading there is not. Book-shops are few and far between, libraries are half deserted, and the great university of the state seems to have no integral part in the Philadelphian social structure.

There is, in consequence, no social obligation to be cultivated and artistic—as there is to be well-born, well-bred, and well-dressed. Philadelphian good taste can be genuine and modest—a thing not always possible in more self-conscious centers of culture. To take but one example, the town possesses some of the most notable private collections of paintings in the country, but they are, as it were, little known and not much considered in Philadelphia. The most remarkable—probably the most remarkable in America—for years existed in confused and picturesque superabundance in every nook and corner of its owner's dwelling; priceless masterpieces hung about the shaving-stand, stood on the floor by the coal-hod, and, one suspected, lay hidden underneath the beds. They were incredibly ill-



arranged for the visitor—but it was just this that somehow convinced him that they were not primarily intended for his pleasure, but for the owner's own. The fantastic, dusty disorder was a guarantee of the genuine love of beauty which had gathered these treasures, quite unvexed by what the town, streaming indifferently by, would think. Even when Philadelphia paintings are painstakingly and palatially housed, it is still true that one feels that the collecting must have been done for collecting's sake.

Art is more unconsidered than despised in Philadelphia. Good taste is allowed to grow wild; it is never actually rooted out. It is true that the local artists huddle together in rather frightened fashion in the artistic and literary clubs in the pleasant, quaint Philadelphian alleys, but this is more a tribute to our ingenuous American belief that art can, so to speak, be "clubbed" into existence, than a real proof that the artists are treated as outcasts. They are merely judged along other lines, and their artistic achievements are no real handicap if they are well-born, well-dressed, and well-bred.

There have been, perhaps oddly, a considerable number of distinguished practitioners of the arts who have originated in Philadelphia. But they have generally practiced else-

where. And having thus transferred their artistic activities to more suitable settings, Philadelphia warms with a certain pride in them. A portrait-painter who languished at home reports that since he moved his studio to New York he spends all his time in Philadelphia executing the commissions he could not secure while domiciled there.

So long as it can keep Art in its place, the town pays it a certain decent tribute. There has long been an Academy of the Fine Arts, and Miss Agnes Repplier delightfully records that when it first exhibited "imported statues" (plaster copies of those in the Parisian Louvre), one day a week was set apart for ladies, and the statues were then draped! Now—just to prove that Philadelphia does move—the annual show of paintings is one of the most important in the country. The opening reception is of a definite social value (just to show that society is willing to give art a leg up now and then), but it would be considered odd to look at the paintings that evening; indeed, no one but eccentric, and possibly socially doubtful strangers from other cities does so.

So much for a home-keeping community and art! We may now ask what connection there is between the quiet life and public morality. It is a puzzle to the stranger that the

peaceful town has so often been politically so corrupt. Indeed, Philadelphia is quite as bad as New York at its Tammany worst; it sometimes seems as if it took a quiet pride in being as dishonest as the metropolis, but without any fuss and feathers, any vulgar notoriety in the newspapers. The Philadelphian home is the shrine of comfort and the altar of the graces, but upon it there burns no fierce moral flame. Philadelphia did its duty during the Revolution, but the young ladies had some very pleasant dancing parties with the British officers. To the mind nourished upon terrapin and Madeira there is something not quite good style in enthusiasms, especially grim moral enthusiasms. William Maclay, writing wittily early in the last century, betrays some of these native characteristics in what he means as acid criticism of New England—spiritually the very antipodes of his own town. The Bostonian, so he says, “excludes good humor, affability of conversation, and accommodation of temper and sentiment as qualities too vulgar for a gentleman.” The Philadelphian, even when he dies for a cause, must do so “affably”!

It may seem that such a picture of genial unmorality cannot be an authentic one of the so-called Quaker City. Indeed, it is perhaps astonishing that talk of Quakers and Quaker-

ishness should have been put off till so late in the Philadelphian discussion. Quakers still exist; there are several prosperous "meetings" in the region, and there are even to be seen Friends who still wear the sober, rich garb of the sect. When charity at home or abroad is asked of the town, these quiet, half-forgotten people come unobtrusively but generously forward. To the dim shadows of the Philadelphia picture they lend a soft, rich color. But somehow to the stranger the Quaker aspect of the town is too shy for capture; the Society of Friends seems only part of its gentle history. Rather, perhaps, they go to make up the larger Philadelphia—the great, industrious, quiet, thrifty town which knows little of genealogy or Madeira, except by hearsay; which contains the largest body of skilled artisans in the world, and is the ideal home of the magazines of largest American circulation, the happy, prosperous, unvexed, average American city.

With some such thoughts you look out over the long stretches of the great city and see the smoke from ten thousand factory chimneys lightly stain her sky, or watch the majestic Delaware stream by carrying its traffic to the sea. You stop thinking of the Philadelphia of fantastic restrictions and queer codes, and see only the metropolis of the great commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Sometimes on the

Philadelphian streets you see sturdy young women—with cheeks like scrubbed red apples—wearing the garb of some of the various religious communities which still flourish in the state's rich farm-lands. Rich corn-fields, bursting barns, autumn fruit, all come into the imagination, and you see Philadelphia as an easy-going, unemotional, comfortable, well-fed, but still solid and dependable city. You begin to believe that simple happiness averages high along the red-brick streets and in the far-scattered, trim suburbs. You ask yourself whether contentment, Philadelphia's contribution and example to the nation, is not as proud and worthy an achievement as any other of which an American town might boast.

## What Is a New-Yorker?

THE most New-Yorkish of ladies, who after an excessively brief, gay winter at home habitually betook herself to the Riviera, to London, to Paris, and to the usual spring, summer, and autumn haunts of European elegance, was once asked by an intelligent and curious foreigner some question concerning the habits and customs of her compatriots. She paused, meditated prettily, and then made what, for the purposes of the present discussion of her native town, is a profoundly significant reply.

"I'm not sure," she said, "that I'm the best person to ask. You see I'm a New-Yorker and I know so few Americans!"

The anecdote—authentic, as all anecdotes should be—expresses with a nice exaggeration what sometimes seems to be New York's precarious position upon the edge of the North American continent.

New York knows very little about America; indeed, it thinks it more suitable that America should know something about New York; it

has visited the pleasure resorts of the Eastern slope, it has been to Washington; it has spent the spring in Florida, and has discovered that California is delightful, expensive, and not too "American." But the vague stretches of the great middle-Westernland are, so it imagines, peopled by dull creatures, speaking roughly and not knowing pleasure. With great tranquillity New York assumes that it is the most habitable place in the country. And it hears calmly that it is "foreign."

It is the privilege of all American cities to sustain a large foreign population. But the metropolis is so accessible from Ellis Island that its foreigners are not only numerous, but have the bloom still on. They exhibit a reluctance to go farther. Associations are formed abroad and government agents come here for the purpose of inducing immigrants to "move on." It may be because the foreigners' unwillingness to live anywhere but in New York seems so natural and forgivable that New-Yorkers welcome the visitors, and assign to them large parts of the town. Aliens exist not only in the slums, but in Fifth Avenue; indeed they are so frequent in the best society that almost every fashionable New York lady, so it is said, now has a pet foreigner.

Foreigners do not seem strange in New York; they belong there. On a spring after-



noon not long ago there was to be seen near the lovely white-marble Tower of Babel in Madison Square an odd-looking, long-haired, bareheaded, barefooted, natural-bearded man dressed in a single dirty white wool garment, an apostle of simple living, who was remembered by one observer as spreading his frowzy gospel five years earlier on a Swiss steamboat. The point is that in New York he excited less comment and seemed more at home than he had seemed at home. And so, to the New York eye, seem the Cubans at the hotels, the Argentines at the cabarets, the Italians in the gallery at the opera, the Hungarians at sidewalk cafés in Second Avenue, the Yiddish actors on the Bowery, and so on through the long romantic catalogue of the town. Goulash and chop suey and spaghetti are no stranger than pie to the American New-Yorker; he has made his culinary *tour du monde* within the limits of his own island. He might well seem, to the more deeply indigenous visitor from the Mississippi Valley, as foreign as the foreigner.

Even were there no aliens in the town, salt-water laps on every side of it, and there is a fair seaway to the four corners of the globe. When the docks and liners with steam up lie little farther away than the railway stations, it is—or was—literally simpler for a New-Yorker to go abroad than to—shall we say

Bar Harbor? It is quite easy to feel that the Battery is half-way to Europe—a famous old London actor, while he was playing in Broadway, used to go every Saturday morning to the green park at the town's tip-end and watch the steamers go through the Narrows to England; it softened his feeling of being far away.

The noble harbor into which the Hudson streams is our chief gateway to the Atlantic, and though few New-Yorkers lounge along the waterside, they inhabit, for all that, a great port of the sea, and their natural heritage is easy access to foreign lands. Whether or not, according to statistics, New-Yorkers travel more than other Americans is beside the point; actually and naturally more ties and interests and memories and hopes bind them to the transatlantic world. Philadelphia and Boston may lie upon some traditional and spiritual promontory nearer England, but New York is closer to the whole of Europe. Your head-waiter is just back from France, your bootblack's cousin has been arrested at Athens and your friend at the club has had a letter from his sister who, married to an Englishman, is now at Salonica. There is no doubt that New York faces east. It feels itself at once our ambassador to Europe and our reception committee to the visiting foreigner.

The first months of war made it exceedingly clear to the philosophical observer that American interests in European events varied directly as the distance from New York. By this, of course, it is not meant that everywhere in the land the European cataclysm did not stir to somber, even tragic, pity. But it was in New York, at least during that first year, that crowds stood and debated about the bulletin-boards all through the night, and that war hung heaviest in the overcharged and sultry air. The tenseness grew less even two hours away—a visitor to Philadelphia that winter found for four days in one week no war news on the first page of his morning paper, a thing inconceivable in New York. The overwrought metropolis, indeed, exaggerated the indifference to the European event reported to exist elsewhere, and asserted that in the remote West Americans had not heard the guns in Belgium, did not even know there was a war. New York was then almost inclined to make a merit of its foreignness. Relief funds, administered in Wall Street, were generously aided from the local purse, with a unity of effort which the great town does not often lend to domestic good works; foreignness took on a look both interesting and gallant.

But foreignness, especially in the antebellum years, was a term synonymous with un-

Americanism; it was an accusation brought against the metropolis by almost the whole country. The visitor to our shores is button-holed in the corridor of his New York hotel by the emissaries of the regions west of the Alleghanies and warned that New York is not American, but wholly foreign. Such dark hints are of course excessively confusing to the foreigner, who has never in his life seen anything less like his native land than New York. In his hotel his very bedroom has terrified him with its necessity for confiding his most intimate needs to an impersonal telephone in the wall instead of to a waiter or a chambermaid. Below, in the gigantic gilded corridors, a strange mob surges to and fro; in the bar lurk unknown and insidious drinks; and in the restaurant strange dishes like soft-shell crabs, the technique of eating which is totally a matter of conjecture and experiment. Outside the town suggests that it is subject to frequent earthquakes or bombardments. Elevated trains shoot above his head, at his feet chasms yawn and bombs explode. In the rare parts of the town which seem at all finished, white towers scrape the high, pale sky, and marble palaces quite unlike any commercial constructions he knows line the crowded avenue. As for the regions dedicated to theatrical and other nocturnal pleas-



The park affords charming vistas of the city beyond.



ures, they blaze barbarically with lights and have the air of being quite temporarily improvised. New York must present to his startled alien eye the appearance of an extravagantly rich mining-camp, where the loot of European luxury is being offered to heterogeneous myriads, many of whom, with their nuggets and dust in their belts, are there avowedly to "shoot up the town."

The presence, in protected corners, of French chefs and head-waiters known in London, or even, in one of the rougher streets of shacks, of the most expensive Italian opera in the world, will never persuade the intelligent foreigner that this is Europe. And we ourselves will do well to consider his point of view. In this sense of being a mere confused shifting camp or fair, of being permanently the least permanent place in the world, New York is the newest, freshest, most American of our cities. It is sometimes alleged that modern steel construction is making it difficult to tear the town down every night and rebuild it every morning, but this is mere optimism. New York is experimental in its vague polyglot spendthrift inability to find out just what it really is.

Philadelphia and Boston, besides a creditable to-day, still bear the evidences of an honorable yesterday; and Chicago, to take that



great city as typical of trans-Alleghany Americanism, already shows not merely her present, but the concrete, clean-cut, self-conscious, deliberate outlines of a future. They have, all of them, a more highly flavored local quality, a more definite personality. New York does its best to forget its past and to be careless of its future. It has amazingly little civic conscience. Of course the speculators in real estate and the politicians force the town to build subways and give such hostages to fortune, but one sometimes feels that New York is willing to engage in these constructions mainly because it likes the noise and gains from the attendant discomfort an agreeable, lively sense that something is happening. The metropolis is a lusty young giant, yelling and shouting, building and pulling down, and gayly tossing about an excess of expensive and lovely toys. It is difficult to say what New York is or will be, because it already is, and probably will be a little of everything. It is monstrously big and inconceivably vigorous. It is our one great city in that it is almost a microcosm of the world. But though it may contain everything foreign that there is in Europe, Asia, and Africa, it is still, everything summed up, not foreign. It is not America, but it is very American.

None of our great towns has anything com-

parable to New York's "floating population"—does the phrase not suggest agreeable questions as to what they float upon? There are never enough hotels to accommodate the arrivals; cut a hole in any New York wall on almost any street, hang a hotel sign above it, and you will find that a stream of patrons mechanically begins to pass through it and "register." The openings of the great hotels of the metropolis are national events, and their characteristics are subjects for enlightened discussion in the remotest hamlets of the land. It was not so very long ago that one of them had neat attendants in uniform, with "Guide" in gold lettering upon their caps, whose whole duty was to conduct visitors from afar through the huge new pile. Troops of visitors there were. It may reasonably be doubted whether they found time during their stay in New York to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, but they gravely inspected what was to them both more interesting and more important.

The luxury, confusion, the gigantic scale of these establishments, and the high degree of their organization are almost beyond description. It was lately asserted that at any one of the newest and most extravagant the jewels stolen from guests' apartments mounted regularly to twenty-five hundred dollars' worth

a week, and it was gravely suggested that so well run was one hotel in particular that the stealing there was probably done by the hotel's own well-drilled band of thieves, who could, by arrangement with chambermaids and watchmen, see their patrons were as little disturbed as possible while suffering the inevitable slight losses. At any rate, it is obvious that in the New York atmosphere of extravagance such losses are no more than flea-bites were in the humbler, old-fashioned hostelrys of our grandfathers.

Everywhere through New York the floating population may be observed floating. In certain parts of the town and in certain moods it seems out of the question that there should be such a thing as a resident population. It is in fact a favorite statement that the night restaurants and the cabarets and the roof-garden "shows" are only visited by out-of-town people. It may be stated flatly that this is wholly untrue and a most unfair attempt to shift the blame. New York has in certain aspects its own distinction and its own sober merits, but it must be admitted that among all our towns it excels in exuberant, unabashed, and vulgar pleasure-seeking. And this is not wholly to the credit (or discredit) of the floating population. The taste for "floating" most notably exists among the fixed inhabi-

tants. The cabarets may possibly not be habitually visited by old ladies descended from the Knickerbocker families, by professors of Columbia University, by lodgers at either the Martha Washington or the Mills Hotels, by ministers of the gospel, or by curators of the Natural History Museum, to pick at random among admirable existing types, but they are frequented by some millions of New-Yorkers. The metropolis does not adapt its tastes to those of its out-of-town visitors. They would not wish that it should. They have not come to the metropolis for "home cooking" in any conceivable or figurative meaning of that phrase. They are there to enjoy themselves New-Yorkishly, and proudly to carry the gospel and the technique of pleasure back to the waste places of the country.

New York has from Revolutionary times accepted with equanimity the rôle of Siren City; indeed, she expects novelists and playwrights to portray the dangers which lurk within her bosom for pure young men and women from the country. Boston and Philadelphia are, Heaven knows, not free from evil, but there is something faintly ridiculous in the idea of their luring men to destruction. On the other hand, the novel or play upon these lines dealing with Chicago is expected to flatter that city as it does New York. Chi-

cago is remote enough to be independent of New York, even in its vices.

New York is notably at ease with pleasure. The habits and customs of pleasure-seeking are widely diffused, are not the property of the so-called upper classes. For example, every one dines at restaurants in New York, and as night falls probably more people are simultaneously in evening-dress than in any other city in the country. There is here no wish to fall into the common vulgarity of attaching a semi-sacred character to the "swallow-tail," but its habitual employment is symptomatic. The easiest way to judge to what extent a town "dresses for dinner" is to notice how many men may be observed walking in such attire or patronizing the street-cars, for, unquestionably, there are American cities where males so clad have a guilty and hunted look and only venture forth in "hacks." Therefore, the way the Fifth Avenue sidewalks and the Madison Avenue cars blossom forth with top-hats and white ties on a pleasant evening is significant. More than elsewhere, too, is New York evening-dress merely what one wears in the evening, not a garb necessarily reserved for occasions and places of supreme elegance. Persons in such attire may, for example, often be seen supping, without fear or self-consciousness and for fifteen

cents, in the famous excellent but cheap white-tiled Childs' restaurants.

And the habit of carrying a cane, fantastic though the assertion may seem, might be made the basis of a philosophical differentiation of our various cities. A New-Yorker really bears a walking-stick in blithe unconsciousness that he is doing anything unusual. But a Boston gentleman of the very highest rank recently seriously envied a New York friend who sustained himself with a cherry stick during business hours. And it is not so many years ago that a credulous new arrival in Chicago was gravely warned that an attempt to carry a morning cane down Dearborn Street might result in physical violence.

Perhaps the chief impression which the metropolis makes is of the vivacity of its life. It is the completest expression of our national *joie de vivre*. And it is pleasant to record that for the most characteristic moment of this quality you would not cite Broadway at night, but Fifth Avenue by day. The sparkle of this famous street is perhaps largely due to the New York climate. Climates are never perfect, but among the world's great cities the American metropolis is singularly fortunate. It is flooded with sunlight, and on its best days the air has a crisp and tonic quality. By a tacit understanding, ill-dressed and sad peo-



ple keep off Fifth Avenue. On a bright morning there is no resisting the street's gay intoxication. The most expensive shops in the world are close at hand, the best restaurants near by. Brave men lounge at the windows of exclusive clubs, and fair women cut coupons at fashionable banks. Life seems indeed worth living. The whole town is gay. Even children and nurse-maids in the Park seem more engagingly clean and innocent and spirited than elsewhere, as if they, too, felt the call of happiness. It is worth while noting the clearness of much of New York's air, doing justice to the clean and simple liveliness of much of its enjoyment, because its prominence as one of the world's chief centers of dissipation and pleasure-seeking has done its reputation bad service with many people of virtue and good taste.

So much may be respectfully submitted in New York's defense, that if a town *sets out* to be gay there is a certain merit in *being* gay. To the deeper consideration of this proposition every one is invited to bring whatever degree of toleration and philosophy life has taught him. It is certain, however, that just where New York is most obviously alluring, it is also most obviously hard, vulgar, tawdry, and repellent. There is possibly no city in the world where such an exhibition could pass



without protest as enlivened the hours of 2 A.M. during New York's second winter of the war. While, to the imagination, the guns about Verdun boomed, the young ladies of the chorus, who had already exhibited themselves in and out of a series of satisfactorily indecent costumes, came forth, for the climax of the night's pleasure, dressed as Red Cross nurses, and kicked the ruffles of their underwear into the faces of the half-intoxicated occupants of the first row of tables. It is at such moments that you must think hard of the vastness of New York, of the variety of its inhabitants and the multiplicity of its interests. You must try to believe that by 2 A.M. some God-fearing people are already in bed and that others may be reading a good book. You must think that, besides roof-gardens, there are theaters crowded for Shakespearian revivals and concert-halls jammed with lovers of Beethoven. You must not forget that great institutions of learning crown the city's rocky heights, and that hospitals dot its lower levels. You must remember that there are not only the idle rich, but the industrious poor. You must again see dark processions of the unemployed marching somberly up the glitter of Fifth Avenue. You must hear ringing in your ears the orations of the social revolution delivered at the feet of Lincoln in Union

Square, as well as the prattle of lovely ladies in Louis XVI. drawing-rooms who coquet with new doctrines as they did in France before the Bastille fell. You must think that not only do simple, rich, Western millionaires migrate to the metropolis, but lads from an older world with their worldly possessions in a handkerchief, to whom, down the bay, Liberty seems to offer a welcome and the hazard of new fortunes. You must consider while the lights burn so bright that it is hard to be the richest city in the world and always to keep your head on straight.

After the town's exuberant vitality, its overflowing wealth is its most striking characteristic. Wealth's own special enemy, Mr. Congressman Walsh, is authority for the statement that ninety-two per cent. of America's money is in the metropolis. Wall Street, now the world's financial center, collects money, and, besides, the continued immigration of the rich from all over the country brings gold to New York as water to a sink-hole. New York is the only place any one migrates to, with the exception of Washington. No one since Benjamin Franklin has ever moved to Philadelphia, and, with the exception of some few who brought a special literary baggage, no one has ever "settled" in Boston. Chicago has a few accessions from what might be

termed the Chicagoan province, but, after all, Chicago to so many of its indigenous inhabitants is a way-station on the road. In New York, on the contrary, almost the hardest thing to find is a born New-Yorker. You may come to New York with the highest social ambitions, or you may aspire to nothing beyond calling the leading head-waiters by their first names, but you believe there is a place for you and your money on Manhattan Island. So, year by year, the golden stream rises higher. Only by the most constant and careful extravagance can New York keep it from bursting its banks.

It might be thought that there were traditions and historical examples enough of how to spend. But when you consider the world's long history you find that money, in the lavish abundance we now know, existed in imperial Rome and went out with it. It was re-invented in Peru, and, even if you come straight down to the nineteenth century, they were rich in Havana before they were in New York. The present fabulous riches have come within the memory of the present generation, and the problem of spending is actually a fresh one, which New York is gallantly trying to solve.

It was long ago discovered that merely to build a large, costly house upon an expensive

site was too simple to be the way out of the difficulty—how often in our smaller American towns have we seen the innocent local millionaire construct an expensive stone “home” and then live in it with two Swedish girls as “help.” Many of the richest people in New York live in quite small houses; there are other ways—such as changing the drawing-room flowers three times daily, or having a decent valet for your chauffeurs—of making the money fly. It is just the growth of luxurious detail in New York which makes the investigation of the great city so profitable to students from the provinces. The lady, for example, who gives a quiet little party of six to dine and go to the play and has bought boxes at three different theaters, so that her guests may choose whichever suits their post-prandial mood, strikes the New York note with beautiful clearness. And the gentleman who, in a fit of half-amused exasperation that his favorite motor-car was being used one morning to convey his wife’s canary to the bird-doctor, sent home that afternoon a smaller car for the exclusive use of the feathered members of his household, is either a New-Yorker or soon will be. There is, too, the imperial gesture, as when lately for a *débutantes’* ball special trains were sent to convey male youth and beauty from the three great colleges.

And, as intelligence has grown the vogue of recent years even in New York, some people find it pleasant to keep a pet weekly paper or a tame theater or an opera.

The habit of extravagance pervades the whole New York community. The shop-girl may have but one dress, but it is in the latest style. No one is ever more than two weeks behind the fashion in New York. People do not regulate their expenditures according to their incomes; they regulate their incomes according to their expenditures, or try to. An extra cylinder in the motor means an extra hour in Wall Street, that is all. Life is so full, so free, that it seems almost ill-natured to be poor in New York.

The moment has probably come in what is hoped is already a glittering picture of the metropolis to speak of "society," noting first, however, that nowhere but in a large city like New York is the life of those not "in society" so full of possibilities of rational or irrational enjoyment. It is beside the point to inquire whether fashionable New York would like to conduct its activities in anything like decent privacy—it has no such chance. It is the victim of our national passion for newspapers. It is, of course, permissible to suspect that the town is so large that even the most highly placed can secure moments of *incognito*, and

that a metropolitan gossip can never know *all* her neighbors' news. But if you were to judge merely from the press, there is no one in West Podunk or Bird Center who cannot accurately follow the daily and nightly movements of New York's crowned heads. In the metropolis itself plebeian intimacy with royalty goes even further. Two occupants of orchestra seats at the opera, possibly leading "buyers" for a high-class department-store, were lately overheard commenting upon the ornaments of the boxes. They viewed with especial pleasure a famous lady in white satin, the more exposed portions of whom were covered with the loveliest pearls.

"Yes, Mrs. X. is looking wonderful to-night. And I think it's so nice that every one here knows she is such a good mother!"

Is this not an agreeable side of democracy?

The legend has grown up and is believed, even in New York, that there is an extra poignant flavor to the fashionableness of New York's fashion, a more glittering pinnacle there upon which the favored few lightly balance. New York envies no other fashionableness, and though this is offensive to other cities, it gives a delightful serenity to New York life itself.

Romantic writers for the Sunday supplements talk of New York's old families, and



indeed it is said that obscure people still exist who were in society before the 'seventies of the last century. But you might hear more talk in Chicago of old families than in New York, and with reason, for it is quite possible that the reigning powers of the Western metropolis have been the longer established. People in New York may have maiden aunts living in the Stuyvesant Square region, but they visit them privately; the stranger may perhaps see these nice old ladies in caps at sunny windows where canary-birds hang, but he will find no one lunching at the Ritz who can introduce him to them. Indeed, the legendary Dutch connection is chiefly useful in excusing the stolidity of well-born young men. New York is socially as fresh as paint and as bright as several new dollars.

The newspaper readers have all been told that the one requisite for being very much "in society" in New York is to be very rich. And the view finds support, it is said, inside the charmed circle itself. At an evening party with song-birds from the Metropolitan one of the proudest queens left in the middle of the program. A rival, whose dislike of music was equally genuine, rose to follow her, but was detained by the gentleman by her side, himself a wit and a noted arbiter of the elegancies.



"No, my dear lady," he said, "you aren't rich enough to leave early. Mrs. A. has ten times your money—it's *all right* for her, but you must be polite and stay till the end!"

We may assume, without further discussion, that wealth receives its due consideration in New York's highest circles. And yet, very rich people *not* in society are much commoner and much more characteristic in the metropolis than rich people *in* it. The gentlemen with megaphones on the Seeing-New-York wagons may know who inhabit all the Fifth Avenue palaces; nobody else knows. The fabled street of fashion is now largely peopled by the unknown rich. The hotels and apartment-houses are infested with them. Some of them belong in New York, others have migrated there—moths tempted by the great metropolitan adventure. But, somehow, for all the activity of their movements, they carry with them a hint of loneliness. It is a sheer physical impossibility for any social structure to accommodate them all. They are condemned to minor circles, to eternal shopping, to theater-going, and to overeating in the restaurants.

Indeed, a situation quite unexampled in all history has arisen in New York. There is so much money that there is danger of its coming to be almost a drug on the market. Rich people do not always even attain to the



Vast aqueducts of traffic span the sky.



honor of being excluded; they are more often not even known. Is it possible that our great national malady, wealth, carries somewhere within it its own antidote? Even now there are optimistic New-Yorkers who, while they admit that there must always be in society plenty of people whose money will grease the wheels, allege that already achievement, beauty, intelligence, charm, and wit are in active demand.

If not in demand in "society," it is fairly certain that they are wanted somewhere in the vast city. New York probably offers opportunity to a greater variety of individual social tastes than any American town. It is a metropolis, if not a capital. But, unhappily, in the latter phrase there lies a sting. If Washington could only be rolled into the larger town there would exist a New York which could definitely challenge comparison with London or Paris. But so long as the nation's affairs are transacted in the District of Columbia, New York has uneasy moments of haunting doubt as to whether it is not, after all, a mere settlement of Wall Street brokers and young actresses. The winter excursion to Washington has become an almost necessary adjunct to the New York winter. And the social opportunities of the capital are spoken of in almost hushed tones by those who would

dismiss Philadelphia and Boston with a laugh. It is a confession by the confused and shapeless metropolis of social incompleteness.

Now self-consciously to remedy social incompleteness is a trait racy of our American soil. The process, always going on, is what gives perpetually the tingling, exciting sense that we are a new country. New York, to take but one example, is big and rich and varied enough to offer some sort of natural and secure and tranquil perch for Art. But the town is so persuaded that Art is an essential part of a creditable metropolitan existence that Art is always being chivvied to and fro by organizations determined to uplift it and individuals sworn to be Bohemian at any cost. Already in many respectable circles every one has once met a painter, knows a writer, or calls an actor by his Christian name.

And this is but one more stroke in the desired picture of confusion and flux and change which is the portrait of New York. The town is a mere experimental laboratory. In Boston and Philadelphia you can know who's who and what's what. And after a certain acquaintance with those cities you can fairly precisely estimate their resources. New York is a grab-bag in a booth at the World's Fair, but there is nothing you may not hope to pull from its depths. Its human structure, to

change the metaphor, is as impermanent as its physical. It would be a joke to talk of a settled and well-regulated society in such a place. An exclusive dancing-class or an assembly ball would be grotesque. Everything and everybody are in the melting-pot in New York. And though New York is still far from the social liquid condition which obtains in great towns abroad, there are reasons to hope that some day, when the mixing process has gone further and it is more nearly possible for any New Yorker to know all New York, the metropolis will be one of the most interesting, stimulating, and pleasant places in the world to inhabit.

It is already, from the American point of view, the most exciting and preoccupying. There is no one who does not go to New York, no one whom fate might not send there to live. Of course, no writer can be so deluded as to think that he only can strip the veil from the metropolis—seven times seven veils are daily torn from it in every magazine and newspaper in the country. Nothing new can be said about it. And all can never be said. The best that is to be hoped is that whatever may be thought or recorded about the American metropolis will derive some interest from the subject—for New York, for better or for worse, is our great national interest.





## The Portrait of Chicago

THE final insult to a Chicagoan is to recognize his town after any absence from it. A certain writer, planning to do a certain article on Chicago, was remonstrated with by a lady from that metropolis.

"I don't see," she remarked, "how you can expect to give an accurate picture of the town, and to do it justice; you haven't been there since January."

This conversation, taking place in April, gives some measure of the rapidity with which, in the opinion of its inhabitants, Chicago changes. For them, who know so well that each moment of Chicago history has always brought improvement, and always will, it is small wonder that the golden moment for writing definitely of their town never quite arrives, and that the real Chicago is always a little in the future.

Indeed, there is almost nothing in the way of change which the Chicagoan may not, with some show of reason, hope for. There is one supreme symbol of the town's accomplishment; now that the Chicago River, so long a

foul and unspeakable stream, has been miraculously reversed in its course, and flows inland toward the Mississippi in a clear blue flood from Lake Michigan's heart, it must be admitted instantly that a city which has wrought this hydraulic wonder is capable of effecting any transformation which its imagination can conceive.

Here, at the outset of the Chicagoan discussion, is what one might call the theme which runs through all its Western music. Chicago is what all American towns theoretically should be—self-made. It did not just grow, like Topsy and New York and Philadelphia and Boston, but it is the product of constant and bitter effort. Looking at a map to-day and observing the magnificent convergence of all the railways and all the steamship lines of the great Middle-Western country upon the southern shore of Lake Michigan, it is easy to believe that Chicago's destiny was always manifest. But it cannot have been so evident to those early settlers. The town was built in a morass bordering a sluggish, sullen stream, swept alternately by bitter winter gales and scorching dust-laden summer blasts from a hot prairie. For months a blanket of drizzling clouds obscured the sun. Chicago has been described by one of its favorite sons as "having no climate of its own, but being

exposed to the incursions of all the climates there are." Of course in these incursions must be included rare days of perfect weather, when the beauty of the town's location by its great blue lake is very moving. But the rule still holds that, though Chicago has a great deal of climate, most of it is bad.

The river has been turned back, and (though the sky-scrapers must be built on piles driven in the water-logged earth) the mud in the down-town streets is a thing of the past; but Chicago has as yet discovered nothing which can alter the essential quality of the climate of three-quarters of its year. Existence there seems predestined to be a struggle against nature and the powers of darkness. The town's whole history has a grotesque, passionate epic quality. The old Chicago was a smoking furnace, a seething caldron. From the windows of a train creeping into it in the murk and mists of the early morning the vast, straggling suburbs, the belching chimneys on remote, isolated islands in a grimy prairie sea had something sinister and portentous in them. Any sweetness and light in Chicago must have been paid for, you feel, with tears and blood. But the town's gallant inhabitants have always been ready to pay that price, and more, for progress. In the spacious elegance of Michigan Boulevard, where on one hand a

symphony orchestra plays and operatic singers carol, and on the other untold thousands of students, male and female, ply all the loveliest arts in marble halls, you feel invigorated and cheered by Chicago's success in being a fully equipped center of civilization, whatever the odds against it may have been. Here is, indeed, the authentic and traditional Americanism which since the Civil War has somewhat faded from sight along the Atlantic seaboard, where great and rich cities are only too apt to let not only luxury and the arts, but civic pride and responsibility, too, come as they will. Here is the reason for the statements so often flung by Chicago in the face of its Eastern rivals, that it alone is the great American city. It has its foreign population in heterogeneous hordes, and its quarters of the town where alien languages prevail, but to some extent it has kept the early American digestion of immigrants; it assimilates a tough, trans-oceanic diet and makes of its inhabitants, if not Americans, at least Chicagoans.

Civic pride is the real Chicago passion—pride in whatever achievement has been made, and pride in the sacrifices entailed by whatever achievement remains to be made. Never, it may be presumed, in the history of the world have its inhabitants done so much for a town in so short a time. The whole structure of

civic, artistic, and charitable institutions has been created by a few generations, who had faith in their chosen home and a gesture at once broad and imaginative.

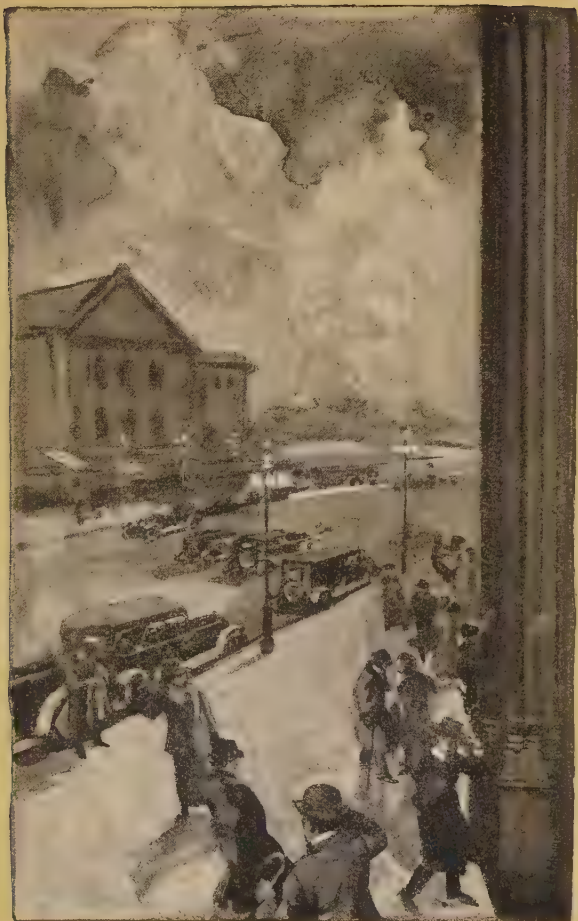
Almost the first of American cities, Chicago erected huge buildings, planned great boulevards, and laid out a spacious park system. It suddenly built a university, from the beginning almost the largest in the world, covering a great waste tract with academic halls and cloisters. It put huge bathing establishments in its parks by its blue lake, so that during happy summer days the poorest Chicagoan might find his city the ideal vacation resort. It set fountains, pools, and sunken gardens around great factories and mail-order houses, so that some refreshing breath of art might come to the humblest worker. The catalogue of its achievements is tremendous. Indeed, there is an optimism in its lake breezes which makes even the most reluctant Easterner believe that if everything in Chicago is not perfection it is only because there has not yet been time to make it so. The things which Chicago *has* had time to finish often have a style and a distinction which are not to be found in such muddle-headed, floundering places as, for instance, New York. The New-Yorker is indeed the most striking and unhappy contrast possible to the Chicagoan—

he is fatuously proud of his town and yet will not turn his hand over for it. The true Chicagoan will sell his soul for Chicago, and sometimes has to. Upon the shoulders of each typical Chicagoan Chicago lies like a burden. If you are not willing to accept this responsibility you move away from Chicago. And it has been maliciously suggested that the *joie de vivre* so conspicuous in the expatriates from that city scattered over the whole world may be slightly analogous to that of the galley-slave released. For the loyalty and service demanded of residents are deep and searching. The march of improvement must be participated in by one and all, and there is no lightest aspect of life too trivial to have importance.

One poor-spirited fellow who has moved to New York explains, almost paradoxically, what for him are the possibilities of pleasure in the Eastern metropolis.

"If," he says, "I want to spend a quiet evening at home, perhaps with a good book, I know that the tables in the restaurants are all engaged, that the theaters will be crowded, the Broadway sidewalks thronged, and that in a thousand supper-places youth and pleasure will chase the glowing hours till dawn. Everything is going at top speed, and in any case no one would think it my fault if it weren't. In New York I can stay at home in





The Windy City on a windy day.





peace. In Chicago I should have an uneasy sense that somehow, somewhere, I ought to be actively completing that evening's triumphant Chicago picture."

There is always a hint of treachery in this moving away. A really high-minded Chicagoan transfers his residence only after fasting and prayer and taking counsel of his most earnest friends. Ideally he should be convinced, first, that he will return; and, second, that from the more effete Washington, Europe, or New York he can bring back loot to adorn Chicago, as a Roman might have fetched home the spoils of Antioch and Athens to enrich the seven hills. Neither at home nor abroad can the Chicagoan escape the conviction of what he is.

Chicago is, in a sense which should now be comprehensible, the most self-conscious great city of the world. The word is used accurately; self-consciousness does not necessarily include either over-sensitiveness or conceit. The great Western town knows, better than any outsiders can, its merits and its faults.

For a long time Chicago existed in a kind of wilderness. Before the World's Fair of some quarter of a century ago it was a kind of *terra incognita*. Even now visitors, especially those from abroad, are guilty of an incredible vagueness about even the town's geog-

raphy. There is a story about some strangers entertained at a well-known club who asked where the lake was of which they heard people speak, and when, from the very windows of the room where they sat its blue expanse was pointed out, expressed surprise, since they had supposed that was the Pacific Ocean! It is not long ago that an intelligent Philadelphia lady spoke of a friend who was "going out" to Chicago to live, much as an early-nineteenth-century Londoner might have spoken of any one who was settling in New Guinea. For a long time the East thought of Chicago with ignorant, wondering amazement, recognized it economically, but not socially.

This was the period of legends which told of the big feet of Chicago girls and of the universality of divorce there. It was the time—not altogether past—of English novels which introduced Silas P. Guigg, a pork-packer, and his vulgar and pushing family. The facts are that the Chicagoans of that day were, many of them, really engaged in building houses designed by Richardson, entertaining Matthew Arnold, and collecting libraries of first editions, and that then, as now, few, if any of them, had ever seen the stock-yards. But it availed them nothing in the outer world. There is an apocryphal story of Eugene Field meeting in London a distinguished

female novelist who was wide-eyed with wondering amazement at learning of his usual habitat, and inquired gravely into his origins.

"Well, madam," he is said to have answered, "when I was caught I was living in a tree!"

The inhabitants of the regions east of the Alleghanies can scarcely have at any period imagined that Chicagoans were actually swinging by their tails in jungles bordering Lake Michigan, but they did view people from those shores with great distrust. Ladies of that town, escaping to the fuller, richer life of London or New York, sometimes denied their origin, and even transformed themselves into Virginians, always a popular though partly unconvincing method of claiming aristocracy of birth in America.

It would be the grossest exaggeration to describe these early Chicagoans as outcasts in the land, yet there is just enough of truth in the statement to make it understandable how the town was knit together and how civic enthusiasm and pride were the answer to the challenge of an effete and doubting world. It must always be remembered that even in this Mid-Western country Chicago is new—when it was a mere frontier post both Cincinnati and St. Louis had old-established families and hereditary wealth.

Of course Chicago did not even begin quite

in the style of the stone age. Many of those early settlers packed in their baggage the best traditions and the finest culture of the East—the last survivor of the Boston Tea Party died in Chicago in '52. But in the building of the new metropolis the more elegant immigrants worked shoulder to shoulder with many rougher-hewn pioneers. And there is a queer, almost pathetic, kind of comedy in the memories of the attempts of the one sort gently and fraternally to civilize the other. A book giving the history of the most aristocratic of Chicago's clubs records gravely and sweetly how many of the first members had to be taught what a club was and how a gentleman used one. And it is true that the reactions of the raw kind of Chicagoan to the more finished civilizations of the world were often notable. There is a singularly pleasant story of two young gentlemen—of the second generation—who were bicycling in Italy. One day they passed through a fairly large town. They were for the moment engrossed in baseball talk; still at the gate at the farther end of the city one of them paused.

"Don't you think," he said, "we ought to find out what place this is?"

They asked and discovered that it was Florence. Contented with the information, they rode on and resumed their talk!

So much for the immunity from impression. Of course more sensitive souls there were, too. The famous lady, for example, who, after a single trip abroad, opened the gates of her country place on a Wisconsin lake so that of a Saturday night "the peasants (!) might come in and from the lawn listen to the music in the drawing-room."

All this is broad comedy, and nothing to be especially ashamed of. There is sometimes now to be discovered in the new Middle West an almost snobbish tendency to forget the past and to pretend that there never was a time when lettuce salad was dressed with vinegar and sugar. A Middle-Westerner not yet decrepit seizes this opportunity to confess that he can perfectly remember the year when olive-oil crossed the Alleghanies, and that he believes the earlier sour-sweet dish had a racy flavor of the very ante-bellum Americanism which reclaimed all that northwestern wilderness.

Chicago is, in Bacon's phrase, "young in years, old in hours." It is almost literally a creation of yesterday. A little group of Chicagoan residents of New York dining together termed themselves jocosely "survivors of the Fort Dearborn massacre," and really might almost have been. The incredible speed with which things have had to be accomplished

sometimes makes in only two generations of a Chicago family the traditional complete history from the rude pioneer American ancestor to the over-cultivated Europeanized descendant. It is just the violence of such transitions which accounts for much of the town's special flavor, for that note of vigor, of competence, of achievement, which made a Washingtonian once assert that in the wilds of Africa she would be able to tell a Chicago woman by the mere firm hand-clasp.

The years count for so much by Lake Michigan that the most preposterous effect of age can be produced almost while you wait. The old residential streets from which fashion has ebbed have already a quaintness which will soon be comparable to that of Beacon Hill, and in the regions where the early Chicagoans built their summer cottages (before the North Shore of Massachusetts was thought of) there are delicious examples of nineteenth-century domestic architecture which will be invaluable when the history of art in that period comes to be written.

As for old families, nowhere in America is *laudator temporis acti* as loud in regrets as in our youngest great city at the passing of an earlier aristocracy and the social swamping of the town by new people. And though this sounds absurd, it is *not* in the least absurd; the



odd compression of Chicago makes the settlers of the '60's seem as if they might have come in the '60's of the eighteenth century.

The contrasts resulting from the town's fabulously quick growth are often startling and picturesque. The uncertainty of actual personal safety was formerly, for the alien observer, one of the most pleasing features of the picture. Only a decade or so ago bandits used to seize especially promising home-goers at six in the evening in the crowded and well-lit North Clark Street and, dragging their victims through the dark and lonely side streets to the Lake Shore Drive, there rob at their leisure. And the mining-camp aspect of the great city was luridly obvious near the sinister Rush Street Bridge, where all through the night ladies wearing upon their lovely persons the traditional king's ransom in jewels sped in luxurious carriages over a thoroughfare upon which no solitary nocturnal pedestrian dared venture. But sandbagging and footpads' work have declined with the years, so Chicagoans to-day assure the simple and trusting stranger.

There is some desolate made land by the lake, for a long time unbuilt upon, the abode of a squatter who claimed title to it and defied all the ordinary processes of law and violence to evict him. Near by his hut is the

"Casino," briefly to be described as a sort of country club in town, which is of an advanced elegance and style and beauty which make it quite the "smartest" thing in America. And it is quite possible that sometimes the air outside might be pierced by the memories of unavailing cries of the rude and untutored sand-baggers' prey while in the Casino's polished lovely rooms dozens of able-bodied Chicago young men are whipped in by public-spirited women to drink tea in a fashion that makes their town honorably compare with Paris or London in idle, ante-bellum days.

Tea-drinking is indeed trivial, but nothing is too trivial for attention if it can perfect Chicago. In the old days when Anglomania was fashionable in America a Chicago hostess—a Presbyterian, too—was deeply distressed if men did not accept the whisky and soda, and ladies the cigarettes, which advices from London assured her were offered at tea-time in that capital. And a rumor that young noblemen staying in English country houses required a refreshing glass of *kümmel frappé* sent to their rooms before breakfast would have been seriously investigated from this lady's establishment in Lake Forest.

All this is not particularly from any slavish wish to copy the modes of other towns. It is more in the nature of a guarantee of good

faith, an evidence that even if it is painful to be fashionable, if it be for the good of Chicago devoted creatures stand ready to be fashionable. Or fashionable and artistic combined! The early days of opera, in every American city which has attempted it, have always been marked by the martyrdom of the American music-hating male. New York went through such a period, emerging at last with an institution incredibly popular but no longer violently fashionable. And Chicago has seen the light. It gave itself lately one winter's respite—a winter marked, so local observers asserted, by unusual social high spirits. But it has again taken up its operatic cross and, to its astonishment, finds it very light. In the fertile Chicago soil musical taste grows quickly.

The early days of the Chicago Orchestra were marked by the same support given by all the social machinery to a civic and artistic enterprise. There was even a brave pretense that it was a gay, smart thing to dine Saturday night and to go on to a Brahms symphony. Now the Orchestra is genuinely liked, and larkish society people are free to dine at eight and arrive at a musical comedy at half-past nine if they like, just as they do in New York.

There is no telling what such a deeply American community as Chicago will accom-

plish, once it puts its mind to it. Upon the stage the speech of Chicagoans is made to rasp like a buzz-saw. But an Englishman visiting this country some years ago reported on his return that the American accent softest and pleasantest to his ear he had heard in Chicago. If he was right it is because the natural Mid-Western accent would have been the least pleasant and that Chicago had in consequence gone to the greatest pains to correct it.

Chicago, indeed, gives the lie to almost all the traditions concerning it. It is, for example—if one could trust people who have never been there—the most material of our towns. But, oddly enough, it is really not with material development that the student of Chicago should concern himself, for—paradoxical though it may sound—Chicago competes with Boston for the position of the least material of our cities.

First of all, Chicago is not, as things go in America, a rich town. It is not poor, but it lacks the huge money accumulations of New York, and the average prominent citizen is not hopelessly struggling to discover some way of spending his income. The great fortunes of Chicago are, on the whole, of mercantile and manufacturing origin rather than of the *haute finance*, and the resultant tone is one of sobriety, almost frugality. Chicago wealth

is—contrary to all accepted tradition—not ostentatious. In the earlier, more tumultuous days when the city was the farthest point east touched by a wild and woolly West and Southwest, they set silver dollars in the tessellated pavement of the Palmer House barber-shop, and the legend went forth of an unbridled vulgarity. Meanwhile in fact the whole structure of public foundations and charities was being built up with amazing swiftness by the prompt generosity and public spirit of two—at the most, three—generations. The open purse for civic needs genuinely acted to maintain a certain modesty in the standards of private living which still persists. Money is not despised there, but if you must be poor, Chicago is not a bad place to try it in.

It is not a bad place to try to be democratic in. Society there is, of course, elegant and fashionable, and to all intents and purposes exactly like any other American society in its habits and customs. And yet, on the whole, one might venture to say that it leans rather on the side of unpretentiousness and well-bred accessibility. It might be taken in evidence that a daily newspaper recently put up placards in all the street-cars with this urgent appeal to even the humble strap-hanger, "Watch for your name in our new department of society news"!

Chicago, perhaps just because it knows that the world is likely to accuse it of the contrary, is, if anything, almost unduly anxious to be modest, quiet, and well-bred. In the summer it avoids Newport and places too tainted with the famous vulgarity of New York, and on the shores of New England claims a natural affinity with Boston's quieter civilization and frugal culture. Indeed it is no little mock New York, but rather, if one may risk the comparison, a great, unshackled, rough and lively Boston of the West, with all the vitality and the sharp indigenous quality which were once the especial possession of the New England capital. Strange religions and new philosophies now spring from the prairie more lustily than ever from Beacon Hill. Even poesy has gone westward, and all Illinois is now a nest of singing-birds.

Nowhere can the persistent efficiency of the Western metropolis be more plainly seen and more agreeably studied than in this matter of art. It was somewhere along in the '80's of the last century that the now classic prophecy was uttered that, "when she got ready, Chicago would make culture hum." Culture is now being made to hum there as nowhere else in the world. The gathering of students at the Art Institute is something majestic and unparalleled; never in the world





Chicago River. now a clear blue flood, flowing under Rush Street Bridge.





have so many eager pilgrims simultaneously approached the shrines of painting and sculpture. If numbers are to count, Chicago is already the art center of the world. It is too early to judge by results whether this great Mid-Western country—of which Chicago is consciously and proudly the capital—is as fertile a soil for art as it is for corn. Time will tell; genius shows itself where God wills, whether it be in Iowa or in France. Meanwhile an intensive culture of these prairie fields is being practiced. Not only are the students lusty and eager, as befits their origin, but the outside public of mere appreciators strains, as it were, at the leash. It is possible in Chicago, and in Chicago only, for a gay, fashionable party of young people, after lunching at a smart restaurant, to adjourn to the Institute, where the thoughtful host has engaged a lecturer to give them a little talk on the pictures there displayed!

There is, indeed, in Chicago an efficiency in dealing with art so hard and bright as almost to terrify easier-going people from slacker communities. Art clubs, art associations, art-display rooms, art theaters, art tea-rooms, and so forth are wisely concentrated in certain admirable buildings where all the advantages of elevators, central heating, and general telephonic service are to be secured. The Chi-

cago Little Theater was a peculiarly striking example of the Chicago way of dealing with budding art. In New York such a tentative enterprise would probably be housed in a transformed studio or a disused and forgotten playhouse or a rebuilt old mansion in the slums. In Chicago it existed on the twelfth or twentieth floor of a clean, sanitary, and expensive building, where art seemed to shed any bedraggled bohemian quality it may have in older civilizations. Here in a thoroughly disinfected air you might, for example, see a play of medieval monkish life written by a young girl from Michigan and played by Wisconsin artists. Again culture must tremble like a hunted fox in the thickets, for quite probably both play and players will be excellent.

Art is indeed domesticated among Chicagoans—they are scarcely afraid of it at all. It has seemed quite natural that in one of the drinking-rooms of the University Club there should be decorative and satirical frescoes by members of the club, who are valued *because* they are artists, not merely tolerated as they might be in more effete but supposedly more artistic regions.

Chicago's attitude to the drama is interesting, significant, and full of promise. And here reference is not primarily to the endowed or the avowedly "artistic" theater, but

to the commercial institution, which of necessity is still freighted with the greater cargo of dramatic hopes. Chicago is the only great town outside New York which can reasonably claim independence of the judgments of the Eastern metropolis. Success in New York is no guarantee of success in Chicago, and failure on Broadway may even be a recommendation near Michigan Boulevard. Chicago is our second—with the possible exception of the Pacific coast cities—our only other “producing center”; plays first shown there may win a profitable local patronage and travel to advantage on the Chicago reputation through a wide district of rich tributary province. The advantage to the American theater of having a second string to its bow is incalculable. Indeed, no one can really think it other than advantageous for American civilization that Chicago should think itself and be a real capital, an independent metropolis.

There are, even from the Chicagoan point of view, blemishes on the reverse of the medal of victory; the gallant struggle for independence and perfection is not yet over. The prizes which the East can offer to talent and ambition are often richer than those within Chicago’s power, and there is a constant small drain of its resources in the migration of men and women to the Eastern seaboard. But this

is in the end more than balanced by the constant immigration, from the East and from the prairie country, of the young and ambitious. Chicago is for them still a land of opportunity, democratic enough to have chances still open for all, American enough to have faith that all the chances are winning ones. Even those who desert have gained something from contact with the boundless vigor of the giant city. Every American ought to live—at least for a little while—in Chicago.

## Washington, the Cosmopolitan

ANY one trying to catch and write down the individual quality of towns and cities is forever being delighted and surprised at the way in which the look of buildings, streets, and gardens betrays the character of places and their inhabitants. If some lonely stranger were to visit the capital of these United States and leave it, having talked with no one, he would, for all that, carry away shining memories of almost all that was needed for the understanding of Washington. He would first of all remember that upon a hill at one end of the town the Capitol, the most beautiful building in America, lies like a fair white cloud. At the other end of a great avenue, he would have gone by the President's House sitting upon a green lawn. From a small, smooth knoll among leafy groves near the broad river he would have seen a gleaming white shaft incredibly pierce the blue of a soft, Southern sky. And he would know that the business of governing the country is the only one going on in Wash-

ington; and that politics is, always has been, and always will be the town's one great pre-occupation.

As Petrograd rose as if by magic from the marshes of the Neva, so did Washington, something over a century ago, from the lovely wooded hills along the Potomac. The capital grew more slowly. The stories are well known of Mrs. Adams's domestic difficulties at the White House. Outside the President's Palace, things were worse in a city which a visiting Frenchman wittily described as consisting of streets without houses and houses without streets. The early memoirs are largely concerned with carriages, freighted with elegant females, stuck in the main avenues in mud which rose to the very hubs of their wheels. Things are better now. Washington has grown to be populous and well equipped. But it is still unspotted by industry; it requires the active, blundering efforts of the government itself—as lately—to build chimneys big enough to stain its clear, Southern sky. It has no trade and no manufactures. Rome is the only other uncommercial great capital in the world; and even in Rome there has been for years a persistent, though unauthenticated, story of the existence there of a corn-starch factory. Washington is the residence of political America and nothing more.



If you withdrew the government of the U. S. A., it would at once vanish into thin air like an enchanted city in an Arabian tale.

Just as in New York they talk Wall Street, in Philadelphia family, and in Boston books, so in Washington they talk politics. That, outside the national capital, we do not generally discuss our national affairs is one of our American faults. It is the constant reproach of visiting foreigners, who in their own best society always find the men engaged in running the country. It is some such recognition of its own incompleteness which is behind New York's deep conviction that Washington ought to be in New York rather than in the District of Columbia. It is just this social lack at home which drives so many of even the silliest New-Yorkers to make flying trips to the Potomac. Perhaps they do not quite know it, but they go there to hear political talk and to see the American horizon widen till the Mississippi Valley and the Western mountains and the sunset over the Pacific come into view.

The non-Washingtonian must record his gratitude that Washingtonians talk politics, even if they often talk stupidly and frivolously. The great dome of the Capitol is dimly seen in the background of every Washingtonian picture. Gentlemen spitting in the

lobbies of the cheaper hotels, and lovely ladies serving tea to foreign counts in Louis XVI. drawing-rooms, all talk the gossip of government. It is not too fantastic even to imagine that some sweet, underclad little débutante might in the intervals of the dance softly murmur some secret of the last Cabinet meeting. No one in Washington is so obscure as not to have some "inside information." No one but has some connection with the government, has had, or hopes to have some such connection.

The ebbing political tides leave very agreeable people on the Washingtonian rocks who linger on in idleness. Dolly Madison had a house for years just across the green from the greater residence where she had held her gay court; it is a pleasant example which might well be followed. Widows there are, and retired generals and admirals. Old gentlemen, too, who have been in the Senate and the Cabinet—too enfeebled for active political service, but quite strong enough to heave a stone at the White House whenever the fancy takes them. Such people are immensely serviceable in such a community. But for them, Washington would be merely a transient hotel, with a great part of the population evicted every four years. New Congressmen and others come to the capital as fresh as paint, and fortunately find there these retired sages who

can school them in the ancient Washington tradition. Nothing in America is pleasanter than such an unofficial drawing-room, where, as dusk settles on the town and the palaces of the government, callers drop in with lightly given but authentic information as to how America stands that day in the world. There are agreeably embittered old ladies, too, who have watched statesmen come and go like the grass that is cut down. And belles through many administrations who confront life no more gayly on present-day terrapin and champagne than in old times on chicken-salad and ice-cream and coffee. Pleasant survivals of an earlier time—trained, all of them, to talk politics and to gossip.

Gossip, indeed—about serious matters and about matters of no importance whatever—forms the background of the Washington picture. The town is already in what may be called its anecdotage. Washington, just by virtue of being uncommercial, is a personal town. Never anywhere in the world were there so many stories about people. They are told to-day in pleasant, leisure hours; they have been set down in many volumes of memoirs and in the innumerable records of the hordes of newspaper correspondents who have from the beginning fattened upon the capital. The stories are not always very important, not

always particularly significant. Still it is agreeable, for example, to know that a female journalist of an early day secured an interview with President John Quincy Adams while that august personage was bathing in the Potomac, as was his custom, from the foot of the White House grounds, by the usual expedient of removing his clothes, and thus keeping him in the water till he had answered her questions. It is also a pleasant minor fact that our once so popular song, "Listen to the Mocking-Bird," was first heard at a White House concert given in honor of the Prince of Wales. And it is piquant to learn of an early foreign ambassador who was accustomed to beat his wife to the accompaniment of a 'cello played by his first secretary for the purpose of drowning her screams. Washington has a mellow past.

Before tackling the majestic spectacle of the town's present, a word may be spared for the future. Not, perhaps, so much for the future as for the people of all kinds who come there with an eye upon that period—whose connection with the government is that of hope deferred. Office-seeking has, through civil-service reform, lost something of its picturesque resemblance to the locusts invading Egypt. But the axes to grind which are unpacked in hotel bedrooms are still numerous. There are the usual conventional lobbyists seeking to

dredge Mud Creek or to build a hundred-thousand-dollar post-office for Bird Center. You can tell them in the hotel offices by a certain lean and hungry eagerness, and by a sort of Washington costume which they wear—it is *not* the statesman's traditional black broadcloth, and yet it somehow manages to look as if it were. Then there are, besides, odd claimants and queer pretenders. There are tired old ladies in rusty black bonnets who, perhaps, hope still to be rich from the French Spoliation Claims, or look forward to inducing Congress to pension the third cousins of descendants of those who fought in the Mexican War. Inventors, too, are to be found, some on the very highroad to prosperity *via* the Patent Office, others destined to linger on for dreary years, pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of some fantastic good fortune. In one little boarding-house in a seedy side-street half-way toward the Capitol there lately lived no less than three inventors of perpetual motion!—a situation reminiscent of a London legend of the jubilee of Queen Victoria, when, in a squalid Bloomsbury lodging-house, four empresses, if they had their rights, once took tea together. “Cranks,” as we call them, wander vaguely to and fro in all the shadows of the Washingtonian picture, like harmless, amiable ghosts, for the most part—half comic, half

tragic. Sometimes, however, the "crank's" eye is lit with some smoldering hate—already in the Washingtonian annals his murderous bullet has put the nation in mourning—the clouds along the murky horizon are lit occasionally with lightning. This queer, obscure world, this mere penumbra of the government, is always present to the imaginative observer. But it must no longer delay contemplation of the great, clearly lime-lit, official world of those who are the vessels of to-day's governmental power and glory. This is a Washington composed and recomposed almost every four years at the will of the people. These are the Washingtonians who have been defined by one old gentleman as merely the Americans who are not wanted at home. But such tart comments are negligible. This is the real Washington.

The White House is far and away the most desirable residence to let at the national capital. (This in spite of the nobility of Vice-Presidents, which of course obliges them to the generous tradition of Fillmore, who said, when he was called to the Executive Mansion, "This is my first misfortune.") It is the most personal, most picturesque of the government's possessions. Its history is the history of many of our American ideals.

In the early days of the Virginian dynasty

of Presidents there were "levees" and "drawing-rooms" at the White House, and it sheltered something very like a court. The court ideal dies hard. Even now the red-velvet rope, which in more effete civilization separates the social sheep from the goats, is occasionally almost put into use when new administrations try to have receptions where the privileged few are allowed a brief encounter with the royal presence in the Blue Room, serving temporarily as a holy of holies. The White House, as is natural, is the constant theater of the conflict to be observed everywhere in American life between our wish to have an aristocracy and our wish not to. But, on the whole, the disinterested observer must adjudge victory to our deep-seated democracy which makes it really unsuitable that the White House should ever be exactly fashionable.

We never forget not only that the Presidential residence is our house, but that the President in it is our man. The almost utopian democracy of public receptions at the White House is both engaging and picturesque. In the early days Congressmen used to come to them with bowie-knives in their high, cowhide boots; and in Jackson's time guards with stout sticks beat back the guests while the food was being fetched from the



kitchens. Then an evening party had all the charm of a riot. A diplomat complained not so long ago that even at the exclusive receptions for the Corps the American young ladies surreptitiously cut all the buttons off his clothes for souvenirs.

Another diplomat, new to these democratic shores, arriving late for a New-Year's day reception, was astonished to find that the Negro hackman who had driven him to the White House had slipped in ahead of him and was the first to grasp the Presidential hand! He could not understand that the Executive hand is as much the people's property as the mansion. Mr. Washington did not shake hands, but since then every Presidential paw has been squeezed by the populace almost beyond the power of flaxseed poultices or massage to bring it back to anything like original shape. The shake is expected to be wholesome and hearty—even a Boston gentleman complained, under Tyler's administration, that he had caught cold from shaking the President's hand.

Even while we pay respect to Presidents, we like them to feel that they are like ourselves. An ex-President's wife tells a story of her daughter ordering shoes in Philadelphia and asking that they should be sent and charged to Mrs. William Howard Taft, The

White House, Washington. The name and address were delivered with a simple, natural, and unpretentious pride. But the shop young lady merely inquired, brightly, "D. C.?"

The White House soon ceased to be a palace and became more and more an "ideal American home." Its corridors are haunted by the domestic virtues. It supplies the feminine element so necessary in governments—and some say in religions. Let a marriage or a birth take place in the White House, and countless thousands over the land dissolve in a sentimental ecstasy of domestic emotion. It is, indeed, difficult for an inmate of the mansion to remain single or to practice race suicide there—*vox populi* seems to forbid.

The White House is, in fact, a sort of national shrine. The life of its inhabitants is closely watched by the lynx-eyed all over the country, ready and willing to detect any variation from the national moral standard. There is no detail of White House life or administration too small to be lit by the lime-light. As early as John Quincy Adams there was bitter criticism of the immorality of putting a billiard-table into the White House. Even the question of Presidential "cuspidors"— But no apology need be offered for grappling with a subject which in any

thoughtful survey of American life and social conditions deserves an attention not hitherto given it by serious writers. Treated at length, the utensil might gain an almost epic quality; for the day was when a good aim at it gave you a position in the community in which you lived. Here it can only be used to illustrate how the White House conservatively and discreetly marks the rising tide of national refinement. President Van Buren was accused of extravagance and luxury in having equipped the official residence too freely and elegantly. Impassioned patriots from the West roused anti-administration enthusiasm by descriptions of a simple wooden box of sawdust. And yet only a comparatively few decades later, under President Arthur, the White House cuspidors were—possibly prematurely—sold at public auction!

To speak seriously, year by year the President's house pretty fairly represents our national ideals. And there are simple anecdotes in its history, like the one of a President's turning handsprings for his little sons only three hours before he was assassinated, which must move any American deeply with a sense of his genuine indigenous democracy. Americanism, as a word, sometimes seems to be a little flyblown these days. But its reality is proven by the very way in which, estimating Wash-

ington, we know we must inevitably give the precedence to the official world.

There is a heroic, almost grandiose, quality in Washington official society. And here the bare facts and figures about "calling" speak more eloquently than can any commentator upon them. In hurried centers of civilization, such as New York, "the call" is remembered merely as something mother used to make. In Washington it survives not quaintly, but in full vigor.

A woman whose husband is fairly high up in governmental circles makes, if she does her duty, between fifteen and eighteen hundred calls a winter! These calls have to be made on the official day of each hostess—the Senate ladies, for example, receive only on Thursdays—an arrangement which ingeniously and cruelly distributes the calling over the whole season.

There is an elaborate ritual of calls, dependent upon official rank. Of course we are too young a country to have anything as marvelous as the table in the British Peerage by which you may learn that the Hon. Muriel Snaggs is accurately the eighteen-hundred-and-thirty-ninth most important person in the United Kingdom. But precedence flourishes in Washington. The Cabinet calls first on the Senate, but the House calls first on the

Cabinet. The hardest initiation, of course, is of those who must call first on the four hundred and thirty-five representatives. Calls must be returned on the first official day, if there is no official day within three days. There is more, but this much must serve to suggest the horrors of a monstrous system.

There have been, of course, individual revolts and concerted attempts at simplification. A "Congressional Club" was lately formed to herd women together that they might be called upon *en masse*. To give one instance, over fifty Congressional ladies living in the same hotel banded together to receive. On arrival you were confronted by baskets to receive cards—over fifty, all sweetly ornamented with bows of pink ribbon. Is the scene not one Watteau would have loved to paint? Beyond the pretty baskets were the Congressional ladies' hands, over fifty, to be shaken; over fifty lovely birds to be killed, as it were, with one stone. But, unhappily, it was soon rumored that the banded ladies did not consider this a call, but only an agreeable opportunity to make acquaintance before the formal individual visits. The car of Juggernaut was weighted a little more heavily, that was all.

A victim must be quoted: she makes eighteen hundred calls a year, not counting private or unofficial calls—pleasure calls, if you

care so to describe them. She says, simply and touchingly, "I find I must give up a great deal in order to accomplish all this and not kill myself." But she goes on in a strain of impassioned and martyred optimism which, somehow, makes one understand that the system cannot be changed: "In one way it is a blessing. Wives from different parts of the country meet; there is an exchange of ideas and views, and a better understanding between the sections. Washington is different from any other place, and it is a pity not to enjoy it to the full as it is."

Even outside official circles, calling prevails. When Miss Harriet Martineau, years ago, arrived in Washington, four hundred strangers called on her during the first twenty-four hours. Women who have moved to Washington ostensibly for their own pleasure have been known to spend an hour every day of their lives calling. It becomes not only a habit, but a passion—a passion exemplified in the Washington lady who was described by her "friend" as "such a sweet, good-natured woman; she returns your call even when you haven't made one!"

Almost the highest comedy of democracy is said to be the first reception-days of green Congressional wives, an experience to which these gallant women advance each year in

solid formation. One is almost glad to hear of a deserter. There was a wayward, rebellious, and charming Congressional creature recently who, as the fateful hour approached when she was to be "at home," suddenly put on her hat and bolted, panic-stricken, round the block. But when, forcing herself to pass her house again, she saw a group of ladies ringing her door-bell, she impulsively joined them and went in. Was she not, like them, a Congressman's wife with a right to call anywhere, even upon herself? They sat down and, while waiting for the hostess, chatted agreeably. And when, at the end of it, the callers began to comment wonderingly upon the continued absence of the lady of the house, our heroine smiled enigmatically: "I don't believe," she said, "we had any of us better wait any longer for her. I hear—" she paused and she spoke with meaning—"I hear she's very odd!" She rose, and the other ladies with her. She went on with them to call on another Congressman's wife.

Congressmen themselves do not call a great deal, it goes without saying. Their leisure is traditionally spent with their feet either high above their heads upon the mantelpiece or under the poker-table—though at the national game the Senate is supposed to surpass the House. Indeed, even more than the compan-



ionship of champagne-haired female secretaries and lobbyists, are cards supposed to fill the rakish idle hours of Senators. Foreigners, hearing statesmen whisper chucklingly to one another of "full houses," are said to have rushed vainly to Capitol Hill, expecting great events in the halls of legislation. Congressmen have, of course, been changing with the years. They motor now and play golf at Chevy Chase, and some of them "clean up and go out to dinner" when night falls. Indeed, the government itself encourages their softer side. It was for a long time possible for Congressmen to have bouquets sent free to ladies from the government greenhouses—cupid's "graft." Even the most reluctant American male cannot wholly withstand the influence of a town which is essentially human and intimate, in the sense that its inhabitants are extraordinarily dependent upon one another for all their amusement. Indeed, what else have they upon which they could depend?

Upon this point the diplomatic colony, accustomed to the *agréments* of the capitals of the world, might be consulted, if they only dared to speak frankly. Washingtonians they have always found hospitable and agreeable, but Washington, as a town, a desert. There are few restaurants. There is no opera and little music. There are theaters, and there

was once a happy period for their managers when rival political parties demonstrated their social strength by going to the play in large and brilliant bands.

Everybody in Washington can be at an evening party, for everybody is in society of some sort. There are no lower classes, manual labor being performed almost exclusively by blacks, who, without unfriendliness, may be described as socially non-existent. Everybody has some one to call upon and to be entertained by. So aggravated does Washington's social activity sometimes seem that it has been described as "a town where the streets are always empty and the houses always crowded."

Early in Washingtonian history the packed sardine became the social ideal. A successful evening at the White House in Mrs. Madison's time was colloquially termed a "squeeze," while its melancholy opposite was described as a "thin" drawing-room. A philosophic female critic of those days put forth the theory that Washington women had a position far in advance of any others in the country because their parties were so crowded that ladies could not sit and wait decorously for gentlemen to approach them, but instead stood, walked about, and even sometimes ventured to speak first themselves! The habit of crowd-

ing extends beyond the White House. Once at one of the Oriental embassies some four or five hundred quite uninvited guests forced their way in and left only when the sly Easterners actually put burning pepper in a jar to drive them out!

There is a story always prevalent at the capital of a strange race of indigenous inhabitants who antedate its establishment. These are supposed to be the descendants of the aristocratic first families of Georgetown—that now faded, lovely little city near which the founders of Washington built. To them, it is alleged, the governmental town still seems modern and vulgar, and its inhabitants simply people one does not know. In their shabby but exquisite Georgian drawing-rooms they lurk, sipping China tea out of thin, ancestral cups. No one knows them, visits them, or, indeed, has ever seen them. This is, of course, what makes possible the pretty legend. Every one should try to believe it; it lends a soft, fragrant, Southern bloom to the shadows of the somewhat over-colored picture of national society gathered from every corner of the country.

Outside “official” society there has been from the beginning a smaller and more fashionable circle at the capital, to which many of the chosen of the people from the remoter

districts have seemed a little uncouth. (A Philadelphian Washingtonian of the early days was amused by two Senators who had never seen a "forte-piano," as she termed that musical instrument.)

Politics—and Senators—are sometimes the fashion with this set, sometimes not. Just now they are pretty much in vogue, having come in with intelligence and "uplift," and broader interests and other fashionable fads. But the day, not so far back, can be remembered in Washington when in the *beau monde* ladies said, "We had the Senator to dine last night," it was quite clear who was meant, as there was only one Senator who could be trusted to eat in the open. And, so little as ten years ago, gay parties were made up to visit the Capitol, rather as one went to the Zoo, to see a representative who was said never to have washed. Even now you can hear in Washington that an administration is or is not fashionable, and learn of periods when it is not at all "the thing" to go to the White House. All this is pleasant and piquant, though we, the plain people, know in our hearts that the third cousin of a Congressman's wife in white wool and rubbers, making her way on the street-car to "pour" at an afternoon tea is more the real thing than the most fashionable unofficial lady, in whatever corresponds in



The austere towers of the Smithsonian Institute.



modern life to the traditional point-lace and diamonds, going out in the most inclosed limousine to dine at an embassy. The more elegant of the two females is, after all, only a camp-follower, an exquisite *vivandière* in attendance upon the great political army.

So many settlers have frankly migrated to the capital for its softer climate and its greater social advantages that Washington has become a national clearing-house for agreeable people from all regions of the country. The capital is, in our land, about the only place except the grave to which people may "retire" with any hope of peace. Indeed, its air of leisure and its freedom from commerce make it in certain aspects almost like a watering-place, a health resort.

Every one is welcome in Washington—though this is no complete catalogue. The capital is, to take one example, "peculiarly indicated," as they say abroad in pamphlets about watering-places, for rich widows, who, in a mild interest in politics and in the soothing conversation of the younger diplomats, find some assuagement. They build their lovely palaces and spin their frail webs in all the principal cross-roads. And every year ladies who are, like *Mélisande*, not quite happy at home move to Washington. There are Bostonians who cannot bear Boston, and



Chicagoans who cannot stand Chicago. Also many who cannot quite decide to live abroad, and so compromise on the capital. Washington is, in fact, almost the great American social adventure, the melting-pot of Americans themselves.

Washington used to be a city of boarding-houses—at one of them in the '40's a distinguished foreign visitor quite by chance had Mr. Henry Clay next her at the breakfast-table—and even now it is permissible for a Vice-President to inhabit a hotel. But the glory of the boarding-house is waning. Nowadays there are plenty of palaces, much elegance, and excellent champagne. There are moments when Washington, even official Washington, seems merely gay and fashionable. But through it all there is the homely homespun quality which we can still claim as American. There was a story, not long ago, of a Secretary of State who met a newly arrived ambassador of a great European Power for the first time at an evening party.

"The boys up at the Department were telling me this morning," began Mr. Secretary, genially, "that there were some difficulties between your country and mine."

"Yes, yes," murmured the astonished foreigner, who had been sent especially to discuss this serious matter of a lapsed treaty.

"Oh, that's all right," pursued the Secretary. "I told the boys I didn't know much about it, but I was sure the trouble wasn't as serious as they thought. We'll fix it." And here he turned to where the ambassador's proud and distinguished wife stood, talking to Mrs. Secretary. "If your husband and I can't get this straightened out," said he, beamingly, "then you and mamma must put your heads together and do it for us—that's all!"

In a town where primitive democratic simplicity stands thus unabashed before effete Europe, it is obvious that much social gayety is essentially tentative and educational. Washington is our great national school of "dining-out."

With all the development of American civilization, "dining-out" has still—let us be honest—for the greater part of the native-born a character at once semi-sacred and terrifying. The magazine advertisements give glimpses of our easier, more genuinely characteristic circles, where the arrival of guests is signalized by the decanning of some beans and the opening of a bottle of Ohio champagne. And ladies may arrive in Washington with the conception, so prevalent in the most popular books and plays, that a butterfly of fashion is mainly occupied with bridge parties and afternoon teas. But at the capital they soon

wake to the fact that even a "ladies' lunch," however prettily the table and the salad may be decorated, gets them nowhere; and that only formal, concerted, night feeding is socially valuable.

In Washington, however, as everywhere in America, man lags behind in all social activities. The burden of eating and overeating always falls heavily on a comparatively small band of dining males. You take in the same lady pretty often. Apropos of this, there is a story of a weary young Washingtonian who proposed marriage in this impassioned phrase, "You see, dear, if we are married they'll *have* to stop putting us next each other at dinner."

It is needless to insist upon the value, in such a society, of aliens, who eat out easily. Indeed, it can scarcely be wondered at if second, third, and fourth secretaries of the embassies come to believe that the services expected of them are wholly gastronomic. There was a preposterous story at the time when Washington's chief club burned that, in its very smoking ruins, young diplomats were seen by the firemen hurriedly counting their boiled shirts to make sure that they could still dine out every night that week!

A young American girl may learn to reject foreigners almost as well in Washington as

abroad—or to marry them. Since the beginning, the ladies of the capital have made distinguished, picturesque, romantic alliances with Europe, from the Georgetown girl who married the Russian ambassador and became the famous Madame Bodesco, to Jackson's Peggy Eaton, who in her old age married an Italian dancing-master who rewarded her by eloping with her fortune and her favorite grandchild!

American men are not linguists, and an ambassador was once introduced to a gentleman who immediately described himself, "*Moi, je suis le sénateur qui parle français.*" Yet, somehow, even without the languages, agreeable relations go on, and pleasant friendships are made. Washington, perhaps more than travels, teaches us how like ourselves foreigners really are. And they have made notable contributions to our American civilization. Ice-cream—pie's only rival in our national affections—was actually introduced as a novelty at a party at the French ambassador's, and it is significant that, as a chronicler of the time reports, "the guests were so impatient for it that there was great disorder."

The war, with its resultant solemn and at first tragic inhibitions, somewhat withdrew foreigners from the Washingtonian picture. But they soon again diversified and enlivened

it as they have from its earliest days. It is but simple justice to say that they contribute enormously to the capital's famous "pleasantness," to its half-gay, half-cultured air of ease. Art has no special place in Washington, certainly no Bohemian haunts; but it has, as it were, an excellent social position. Foreigners, who have all been on easy terms with it in the capitals of Europe, find it neither unnatural nor unmanly to speak of it here without shame. It is not obligatory in Washington to have cultivated tastes, but on the whole they are not thought badly of. Indeed, many advantages of life abroad are to be had by the Potomac, including leisure. Washington is not merely a city of magnificent distances—to quote the phrase for which it is indebted to a Portuguese diplomat of its earliest days—it is also a town of spacious leisure for amusement. Perhaps the most powerful impression it makes upon the stranger is of its broad, sunlit idleness. The great, sleepy avenues are typical of the town's immunity from toil. Government, the only business there, cannot be carried on without some slight effort, but the servants of a democracy are rarely overworked. The eight-hour day has long been an intolerable burden to Washingtonians. Clerks leave the departments for the day at an hour when hard-working New York brok-

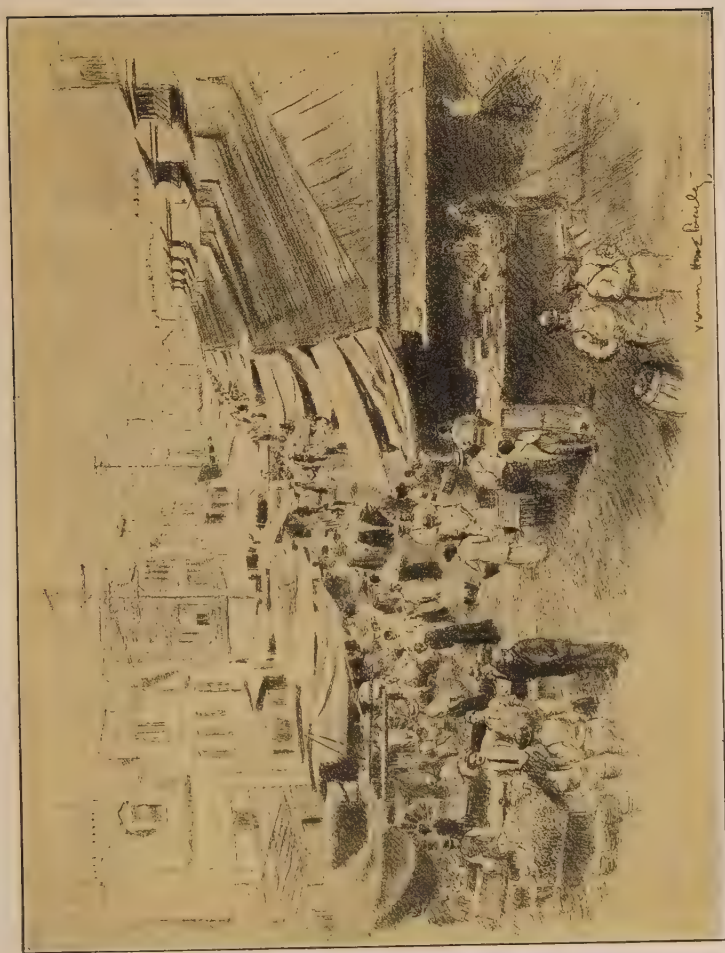
ers are just recovering from the luncheon champagne and preparing to tackle the afternoon's business. Washingtonians, indeed, always seem to have time for all the things for which the inhabitants of our huge, lively commercial centers have no time—for morning walks, for pleasant afternoon talks, and for knowing everything about one another's affairs. It is, as some foreigner aptly put it, the *salon* of America.

Though Washingtonians pass, Washington itself lives. The city has an individuality, a tone which cannot but affect its inhabitants. Its amazing, though only half-appreciated, architectural beauty must, even though they are unconscious of it, transmute somewhat the arid New-Englander and the uncouth Westerner. A bland climate where the crocus often pushes through the grass in late January must help teach people how to be idle and amiably gossipy. The town is pleasant—that is almost its most obvious characteristic—and pleasant in a warm, well-fed, Southern way which is irresistible. The Washingtonian airs are almost as redolent of good cooking as the Philadelphian. The capital lies in the great food-belt of the Chesapeake Bay and the Virginian tidewater country. Washington always seems near the source of supplies. You used occasionally to see in the main shopping

streets countrymen with three or four ducks to sell. And even now the game laws are mysteriously relaxed for the benefit of the capital—many a New-Yorker takes the trip to Washington just to eat quail. The markets are sprawled over broad streets in a generous confusion. Here and there toiling blacks and turbaned negresses make you realize that this is Southern plenty. In spite of all the improvements to the hotels, the best and most characteristic eating-place is the famous oyster-house of nineteenth-century furniture and odors, where the bivalve, roasted, is served with a sauce such as never was by sea or land by grinning, cheerful black waiters, and an even blacker cook whom you instinctively address as "Snowball."

The traditional Washingtonian cook is a happy person of color, preparing his admirable dishes with gusto and abandon. He grows rarer, of course, as the old South passes. But to encounter such a one is good fortune, even if it be for nothing more than a half-hour's gastronomic gossip. The occasion is here seized to record such a brief meeting with a distinguished old gentleman of color, described by a competent authority as the best cook in America. As a boy, so he explained, he had been apprenticed in Philadelphia to a famous cook who was then an old man. His





Belair Market.



cooking recipes thus go back to Revolutionary days, with only one transference from hand to hand. It is impossible not to feel that these formulas, never committed to writing or to print, are the sacred secrets of an ancient and honorable profession. It is absurd, perhaps, but a vivid, pleasant sense of the country's long history is warmed into patriotic being as one thinks that Mr. Washington may have eaten with relish of, shall we say, "snapping-turtle soup"? This, says the old man who now alone can prepare it, "we used to make when the season for terrapin was over"; and he adds, in a decorous, courtly, Southern way, "It was considered one of the best of our riverside dishes." Does not the last phrase suggest delightfully the great Potomac, and the pleasant country, and, more, that the capital has by the famous river's course eaten this many a year good food and drunk good wine and talked good talk?

Washington, when the day's work of governing the land is over, is a great, warm, sunlit, spacious, idle drawing-room where one can savor to the full the flavor of our own American land. Even the dullest imagination must, on Capitol Hill, stir to some sense of the pageant of our history, to some memories of all the great Americans who have through the years streamed here to the country's heart. The

town's name must, even while we are gay and idle and gossipy, mean something, commemorate somehow the Father of his Country. He who rode horseback over the lovely, wooded Maryland hills to choose its site does indeed still haunt them; now they are crowned with marble. He lives. And Lincoln, perhaps. And many others if we have heart and eyes to see them. They, too, make the town pleasant.

## Baltimore

FOR the sentimental traveler in our country one of the pleasantest adventures will always be his start down the Atlantic seaboard and his eager watch for the first signs that he has come into the romantic South. There has been an amazing change of feeling in these peaceful post-bellum days; it is scarcely fantastic or paradoxical to say that it is the Northerner now who is tenderest of the memories of that earlier, lovelier South. Yet the Northerner, on his romantic journey, is only too apt to think that until he has at least crossed the Potomac he is still in his own country. Indeed, it is often only orange trees and palms which will finally convince him. But latitude and climate are not everything; North is North and South is South in spite of them. Even if the snow flies as his train pulls into Baltimore, he should descend from it, for he is passing the South's metropolis, her strongest, richest city—near the Northern frontier, it is true, but proudly asserting her right to act and to speak for the South, even though in those old war days she was racked and

torn by two loyalties, burnt and martyred by the flames of two patriotisms.

Baltimore's present "Southernness" is not perhaps the kind of thing wholly demonstrable. True, you will at once hear the unmistakable accent upon everybody's lips. And you will find the black race on every hand, often in picturesque destitution and the classic dishevelment and bandanna head-dress, but oftener in amazing prosperity and, especially in Druid Hill Park of a Sunday, in dazzling and immaculate raiment. But the Southern quality, which for the sentimental traveler hangs over everything like a veil, is more elusive. There are streets of red brick houses which, but for the grace of God, might be on Beacon Hill in Boston. There are white marble steps no more shining than those in the Quaker neighbor, Philadelphia. There is no hint of decay or neglect to suggest the nearness of the easy-going subtropics. Yet somehow it is possible to detect a softer grace, a Southern richness of bloom. These are the people who so naturally speak of their doorsteps as "pleasure porches," and call a strip of beach along the Chesapeake a "pleasure shore." In fact, there is always a hint of leisure about Baltimorean activity—the "rush hour" comes early. And there seems all through the day more time than in most places

for the smaller courtesies; probably nowhere are so many women overburdened with heavy market-baskets helped to mount the car steps. Those market-baskets, too, hint at good living, "Southern style." But Baltimore's title of "gastronomic capital of America" must be treated later, more at length, and in a style more impassioned and lyric. It must be enough now to say that there is all through the town a sense of that richer cuisine, that more frank enjoyment of the pleasures of the table, which here with us, just as in France, to cite a suitable gastronomic example, tells you that you are headed Southward.

Baltimore's streets are little vexed by tourists, for the most part undisturbed by the rumble and the megaphones of "sightseeing wagons." Lounging along them, it is possible to have something of that pride of discoverer and explorer which to any true lover of towns and sights gives such a warming proprietary feeling. Baltimore is so near at hand that it seems obvious—and is neglected. It has, it must be admitted, few definite "sights," except an admirable gallery of paintings, which is unaccountably kept closed for almost half the year. There is, if you like, little to see—just the town itself. But the town itself is so very pleasant!

At the very beginning it is almost inevitable



that one should speak of the monument to Washington. It is around it, sitting upon its green hill, that the town groups itself, and to it, in a way, that one's memories of Baltimore cling. The monument still manages, in spite of the passing of almost a century and the coming of steel construction and skyscrapers, to dominate the Baltimorean scene. It will probably be the center of the view from your hotel window. You will see it in its small park, surrounded by respectable pleasant streets of spacious old brick houses, and beyond it the gilded domes of the old Roman Catholic cathedral, giving a curious exotic touch to the picture, while they also remind you of the Calverts and the early days of the Catholic colony. You may perhaps see flying against the blue sky a flag with the colors of the Calverts; colors worn, too, in the Maryland thickets by the Baltimore oriole. But the eye will come back to the gray pledge of Maryland's loyalty, the first memorial set up in the whole country to the great Washington.

The column is perhaps of no great intrinsic beauty, its proportions have even been described by the irreverent as "dumpy," but anything so skillfully placed would have an effect, and, in fact, the shaft has the solemn, yet good-natured, dignity of which the eighteenth

century and the first quarter of the nineteenth knew so well the trick. It has very definitely "an air." You take off your hat to it, with some show of old-fashioned politeness, and you realize that you are in a "gentleman's town."

Mount Vernon and Washington Places form a Maltese cross of green, in which there are statues of local men of note, a Barye lion, and some good bronze groups of Peace and War contemplating a scene now so manifestly devoted to the former. Down the hill in front goes a path broken by steps, statues, and a fountain, and bordered by green bushes and rose-trellises. There is a pleasant legend of a gay return from the ball, when, to win a mad bet, a famous belle of an earlier day plunged into the marble basin of the fountain, a lovely naiad in a satin frock. Such memories, however, do not disturb the present decorum of the scene. Indeed, from the foot of the hill, to see the Father of His Country keeping guard over his city of Baltimore is a serenely solemn thing. You remember that it was over Fort McHenry down the bay that the star-spangled banner floated which inspired our national song, sung for the first time in the old Holliday Street Theatre, on a site where you may now hear the villain of modest-priced melodrama tear a passion to tatters.

Curiously enough, however, for all the memories of '76 and 1812, there is scarcely a town in the country which still so definitely keeps its English characteristics and seems so to have preserved the continuity of its traditions. The mere names of the streets are a delight. Alpaca Alley, Apple Court, April Alley, and Apricot Court—the alphabet begins well. There are, of course, the names which suggest history, Calvert and Howard Streets, and Cathedral Street shedding peace. Also Charles Street, which, humorously enough, is prolonged by Charles Street Avenue, and this by Charles Street Avenue Extension. But there are also Crooked Lane, Comet Street, and Crab Court, Cuba Street, China Street—remember the days of Baltimore clipper-ships—Featherbed Lane, and Fawn Street. Friendship is a street, an alley, an avenue, and a court. There is Lovegrove Alley now, and there used to be Lovely Lane. Johnny-Cake Road still leads to Johnny-Cake Town. Jew Alley, Madeira Court, Maiden Choice Lane, Nero Alley, Pen Lucy Avenue, Pin Alley, Plover Street, and Plum Row—can London itself do better? And naturally there is Petticoat Lane. Plowman Street, Sarah Ann Street—but the list already gives the authentic British flavor of Baltimorean nomenclature.

Charles Dickens noted the British quality in the Baltimore of his day.

"The most comfortable of all hotels in the United States," he says, "is Barnum's, where the English traveler will find curtains to his bed, for the first and probably the last time in America."

There is more, not complimentary to the rest of the country, about finding enough water for washing in the bedrooms. And it is possible to argue about the good of bed-curtains. Still, as a contemporary bit of evidence on our special point it is interesting.

There has never been a great foreign population in this part of Maryland, beyond a respectable sprinkling of Germans. The names above the shops are largely English names, and the faces in the streets are for the most part American faces, a state of things unknown to the present generation in such towns as Boston, New York, or Chicago. It has been easy, under such conditions, for old customs to survive. Even in the newspapers old phrases still are found. An auctioneer, for example, advertises the sale of furniture belonging to "a well-known family now declining housekeeping." Madeira and port are still occasionally drunk in Baltimore from the ancestral cellars of old-school gentlemen living about Mount Vernon Place, and, until

lately at modest wine-dealers' bars by the ordinary clerk or artisan, who everywhere else in the country would have either fuddled himself with spirits or ruined his digestion with ice-cream sodas. Occasionally, as happens in America, can be found a custom long passed by in the older country. You might hunt the length and breadth of England without finding what you may see in Baltimore, the sign-board of a barber who professes himself ready to do "cupping and leeching," this queer eighteenth-century trade surviving almost at the very gates of the great Johns Hopkins Hospital and its modern medical school.

At the top of the steps up to the monument you perhaps saw a colored vendor of flowers, making a gay patch against the green and gray. He was probably the only flower merchant from whom it would be the correct thing to buy at that place. For there is always in Baltimore one shop to which one should go. Immemorial custom, the continued patronage of the gentry, have settled where you must purchase everything, from a fresh egg to a tiara. Yet the other shops have a trim and satisfactory air, and somehow the respectability of those of a prosperous county-town in England.

The English connection was a close one in the early days, even after the Revolution.

The daughters of one single family became the Marchioness of Wellesley and the Duchess of Leeds. You could find some beautiful portraits, by painters such as Sir Thomas Lawrence, both of Baltimoreans of that day and of their friends across the Atlantic, friends highly placed and famous, in the deserted and dusty rooms which used to house the Historical Society. The hillside street where the rather depressed-looking mid-Victorian building of the society stood was one of the few in Baltimore which seemed forgotten and dilapidated. No one appeared to visit the pictures, almost no one the library, where a few readers lurked in the gloom to which you penetrated to see an admirable portrait of Washington. To the romantically inclined, these visitors there could be no others than the last representatives of proud but decaying Baltimorean families. Indeed, to a sympathetic eye the town constantly suggested, quite as it should, the persistence of a colonial aristocracy.

There are legends, of course, as there are in every Southern town, illustrative of the pride of birth, all charming stories, but mostly of one pattern. There is one house, however, of which they tell you tales a little different. It belonged once to a family of Portuguese Jews, emigrants from a country where their race, more than anywhere else in the world, traces

its lineage back into the mists of immemorial antiquity. They were strict religionists, even maintaining a private synagogue in their house near the very street where the Cardinal may still occasionally be seen taking the air. They were proud socially, too, and were received on equal terms by the Gentile aristocracy. Their odd pathetic story is of the gradual dying out of the family. They were too orthodox to marry any but Jews, they were too well-born to condescend to any of their fellow religionists in this country. The daughters, strictly reared in the family religion and the family pride, faded one by one to spinsterhood, all but one lovely girl, of whom they tell the romantic tale that she ran away—and was forever forgotten. For a time *mésalliances* on the part of some hot-blooded son preserved the name. Then finally it was lost, and only these queer memories survive.

The numberless antique-furniture shops will, naturally enough, provide daily tales of an impoverished lady just on the point of parting with exactly the piece you were looking for. And though you may have a moment's suspicion that the whistling and hammering in an upper room come from a cheerful German-American workman now fabricating—and "antiquating"—the furniture of this un-



happy gentlewoman, if you have a nice nature, you will believe in her.

It is paintings, however, the sale of which is oftenest accompanied by all the eccentricity which is the privilege of a long-existent society. There was a Vandyck, if you please, to be had one spring at the best ladies' hair-dressing establishment, and a Murillo on sale in the parlor of an employment agency. You might believe in their authenticity or not, as you liked, but there they were. And there is even more.

There was to be found in one of the least-frequented corners of the town an extensive collection of paintings, which had not spared the Italian, English, Dutch, French, nor Spanish schools of art. It was on sale—after a fashion. That is to say, it was not offered, but to any one who might casually stumble on it, the owner would confess, with some hesitancy and shyness, that she would like to turn it into money. She was a pleasant, middle-aged lady, dressed in a fashion that somehow made you think of *Godey's Ladies' Book*. She was no professed connoisseur of art. But her father was fond of paintings, and these "used to be about the house." She was always fond of the Murillo, but she herself liked the blue of the Titian better before the picture was re-

painted by that Italian from New York who did so much cleaning up for her father. (As to the Titian she was unmistakably right. As things now stand the version of the same subject in the Uffizi at Florence is the better painting.) Still, she liked the pictures, all of them, and was not modern enough to be troubled by any doubts as to their authenticity. Indeed, had not the portrait of the Dauphin of France been recognized as such by several visitors unmistakably foreign, and possibly, so she suspected, emissaries of the French government? And did not an agent of the Boston Museum of Art once obtain access to the collection disguised as a steel-worker on strike? There was a local expert of some skill in this matter of paintings, and it was once delicately hinted to the lady of the collection that if he were to examine and guarantee her pictures their sale might be easier. She, bless her for it! drew herself up delicately, and made an answer which the sentimental tourist himself could never have invented and put in the mouth of any proud aristocrat.

"I scarcely think his opinion could be very valuable," she objected. "His family lived near ours for many years, but we did not visit them."

The writer did not wish for the local expert's opinion, either. He believed in the au-

thenticity of every canvas, and only wished he could buy them all.

The new Baltimore risen from the ashes of 1904 is praiseworthy but not picturesque. The energy, however, and the progressiveness behind it are an essential part of the town's character. They had the first water-works here, the first lighting by gas, the first telegraph, and the first great railway. And it is just this blend of the enterprise so generally termed Northern with the easy Southern acceptance of the pleasant things of life which gives Baltimore its special note. These and another perfectly individual thing, the town's fashion of being a great port of the sea.

Baltimore is, if one may put it that way, the most inland of places at which you may take ship. Though through at least half the town there is the pervasive sense of salt water and sea-borne traffic, it is not of the Atlantic that one thinks. It is true that Baltimore's ships plow the waves of that and other, remoter, oceans. But Baltimore is the Chesapeake Bay's.

There is a pretty little park called Federal Hill—a fortified encampment of Northern soldiers during the Civil War, now a pleasant sunny promenade, with grass-plots, trees, and flowers in huge stone vases—from which you get the best view of the harbor, the Patapsco

River stretching away in many miles of long, lazy curves toward the great bay. Below you lie sailing craft, and down where the channel deepens you can catch sight of the funnels of great liners. At the left the harbor ends in a narrow basin, almost enclosed by the land, and there at the levee the bay steamers lie. Every morning and evening they start, big boats for Norfolk and lesser craft for every branch of that wonderful great bay, for every broad river that penetrates tide-water Virginia and the eastern and western shores of Maryland. Small, battered, puffing antiquities they often are, these Chesapeake steamers, depositing you finally in the middle of the night or at dawn at some remote, unknown up-river landing. But only by such irregular, almost illicit means of communication can you reach queer towns forgotten by the railways, old manor-houses where one may imagine old furniture, old wine, old-fashioned hospitality, and old gentlefolk to exist as they did a century ago. Indeed, one may imagine anything about the Chesapeake and its shores, for they are unknown and forgotten. Lately the richness of the agricultural lands has begun to attract settlers again. Not all of Baltimore's immigration goes West now. By the water-front you may occasionally see a flat-bottomed, snub-nosed boat starting, loaded with a whole

colony of German farming families, for St. Mary's County or the Eastern Shore.

The levee, alive with hurrying passengers, and colored stevedores and roustabouts moving at lesser speed, is always tempting the sentimental tourist to embark upon strange explorations. Who would not see the Nanticoke, the Choptank, the Wicomico River? Who does not long for the Patuxent, the Pocomoke, and the reaches of Tangier Sound? Then there are as well the West and the Severn rivers, with stately residences on their green banks, and Annapolis, that loveliest of little capitals. There are boats that go up that broad Potomac to Washington, or slowly mount the Rappahannock and the York rivers, taking you into the very heart of that forgotten Virginian country. And always there is in Baltimore the haunting sense of this great contributory province, land of unknown possibilities and fading memories.

Concretely, it is the great bay and its shores which pile Baltimore's markets high with the best and cheapest food our country knows. The Chesapeake itself sends "fruit of the sea"—to borrow a pleasant Italian phrase—of every description, and from a very early spring to a late autumn the market-gardens and the orchards of Anne Arundel and St. Mary's, counties pleasantly named, pour fruits

and the freshest vegetables from a real horn of plenty. You may eat Maryland peaches as early as June, and Maryland strawberries as late as October. And the air above is the chosen haunt of game-birds actually eager to be roasted over the fires of Baltimore. The phrase must be repeated again, "gastronomic center of America." For the grateful city quite unreservedly avails itself of its advantages; it seems to be in a perpetual carnival of marketing.

It is not merely that in Baltimore's clubs and in the houses of her aristocracy is "good cheer" so abundant as to be famous. Every one knows the tales of feasting, and has heard the legends of high betting on races between favorite terrapin, devoted to sport during the half-hour before they enter the pot. Rare old wines, incomparable oysters, snowy crab-flakes, ruddy canvasbacks—all these help to compose a picture of mellow tone. But what is even pleasanter to contemplate is the high-heaped larder of the humblest Baltimorean.

Of course it is not possible for the casual observer to be behind every kitchen stove and under every dinner table in so large a town; he must trust to his observations in the marketplace and to what chance acquaintances of the streets and shops can tell him. But he sees the humblest baskets go home filled to over-

flowing with things which are luxuries elsewhere. He knows that the moderately circumstanced can eat soft-shell crabs by the dozen, and the really impoverished buy oysters by the barrel. He will spend happy mornings lounging about the low, rambling, picturesque markets. Here at dawn country wagons still lumber in from the great high-roads with "garden-truck," and in the late afternoon go home with tired but happy parties of marketers in rustic clothes and real sunbonnets. Here is a never-ending, cheerful confusion, and the satisfying sense that no one is going hungry.

Indeed, Baltimore, among great cities, would seem to be the paradise of the small income. Nothing is perhaps really cheap in this country nowadays, but by comparison life in the Maryland metropolis is actually within the reach of all. Supplies, to employ the term most comprehensively, are abundant.

In all Baltimore there can scarcely be more than a few score "apartment buildings"! This statement is meant literally, not as a picturesque exaggeration; though for a New-Yorker, for example, it is only by a far flight of the imagination that such a condition of things can be conceived. Baltimore is, broadly speaking, still a city of small houses, the pleasantest large settlement of the moder-



ately rich and the moderately poor in our whole country. There is plenty of money in Baltimore, but there are few great fortunes; the plutocrats do it there on a modest ten millions, and in something considerably less pretentious than a New York or Chicago palace. The standard of expenditure is low.

On a modest working-man's income you might and perhaps may still live in a delightful toy-like little red-brick house with fresh paint, green shutters, and the whitest of white steps. Your house may be only ten feet wide and a story and a half high, but it is a dignified, self-respecting habitation, and your castle as no flat can ever be. Near you, in whatever quarter of the town you may live, are probably pleasant squares planted with wide-branching trees, or streets gay with grass-plots, flower-beds, fountains, statues. Only in Baltimore do such boulevards run through regions of the tiniest, simplest houses. All this, if you are to view towns with some wish for the well-being and happiness of humanity, makes Baltimore a really comforting place.

There is still more matter for philosophizing in these charming slums. To the sentimental tourist it seems impossible to overestimate the artistic, ethical, and sociological effect of the white doorstep, which in both Philadelphia and Baltimore is the most prom-

inent feature of the urban scene. Ideally, it is of marble; failing this, of fair planks of wood. There it stands, ready to be scrubbed each morning, to be painted each spring. It is the outward and visible sign of thrift, neatness, a kind of guarantee that within, too, there are cleanliness and all the domestic virtues. And happily for Baltimore, with the exception of a few sinister and ill-omened new streets in the outskirts, the white doorstep is universal. It adorns wealth. It mitigates poverty. It will be an evil day for Baltimore when she gives up this emblem of her civilization.

All that can be said about the comfortable situation of the Baltimorean applies, perhaps more strikingly, to that of the black Baltimorean. There is no intention here to discuss the South's problem. But the sight of streets of good three-story houses occupied, in apparent peace and prosperity, by the Negroes, who have bought a whole respectable white neighborhood, is at least interesting evidence in the case. And from the point of view of the individual quality which it gives Baltimore, the money the Negroes get is spent, much of it, in heightening the "local color" by the gayest garments.

This is no article comprehensively descriptive. If it were, there would be a catalogue

of old buildings, itineraries—to parks where grass-grown earthworks of the war of 1812 sleep in the sunshine, and old manor-houses that are now pavilions around which children play and idlers like the sentimental tourist lounge—and innumerable serviceable hints for the stranger. But all that it hopes to do is to stimulate some one's curiosity, to detain some passer-by, and perhaps to point out to some native, whose eye has grown dull from custom, what a delightful town he lives in. Indeed, all over the country there is great need that justice should be done to the indigenous sights. For so many years we have done ample justice, and more, to Europe, that the moment may be coming to pause occasionally by the side of some lovely fragment of our own past, to meditate upon the fact that the unnoted years as they go by are making us an old country, and that over the face of our civilization is creeping a richer, more romantic bloom. Some day that famous traveler from New Zealand will be prowling among our eighteenth and nineteenth century relics. Is it not to be hoped that before he discovers us we may discover ourselves? And as a beginning must be made somewhere, why not at Baltimore, sitting at once modestly and proudly by her great bay of Chesapeake, and putting pleasantly before you her long history

of an American town? She can prove to any one who will give her half a chance what a good, a dignified, a charming thing it is to be an American town.



## Is There a West?

THE Eastern heart dilates immediately on crossing the Mississippi. You have been told that the air is freer and fresher; that the old, silly, social stiffness is to drop from you in the warmth of an indigenous bonhomie; that every fellow-passenger is a potential friend, even perhaps for life. And all this really is so; there is a social magic at play even in the Pullman car, and the train, flowing westward, leaves behind it a black cloud of Eastern inhibitions, like a trail of smoke. Then gradually you realize that the new friends who have so unconventionally and so hastily clasped you to their bosoms are all also Easterners, intoxicated with the breeziness of the plains. This first gives you pause.

Some cynic of the smoking-room tells you that Los Angeles is the metropolis of Iowa and backs up his paradox by figures proving that a great part of its citizens originate under the government of Des Moines. Once your suspicions are aroused you are, even during the railway journey, intent upon anything which might serve as proof that there really is a

West. These indications are not too frequent; the continent was, only lately, crossed with so poor a result as only three prairie-dogs sighted, and one superannuated cowboy of about eighty, who was obviously either a survival, a mere museum piece, or some decrepit Easterner galvanized into this fancy-dress parade by his memories of Buffalo Bill. The West suddenly becomes shadowy and elusive.

There is, of course, a Middle West; it is astonishing to find that it now extends as far as Utah, where in Salt Lake City an enterprising junk company proclaims itself "the largest in the Middle West." The West, if it exists, has already been pushed beyond the High Sierras. It only remains to discover whether or not it has been shoved into the Pacific and safely out of American life.

The West, in the old sense of anything cruder, less civilized, rougher than the East, is unquestionably gone. There is a bathroom to each hotel bedroom, and the younger English poets lecture in all the smallest towns. It takes an eagle's eye to find the traditional lack of cultivation, and few Easterners, at any rate, have eagles' eyes. This question of "culture" may as well be disposed of now and flung out of our way; it impedes our westward progress. As you advance toward the Pacific, "culture," if anything, only takes on a more



passionate, almost exacerbated quality, as though its possessors were determined to prove to the scoffing how brightly the piously guarded flame burns on the sunset altar to the muses. For decades daughters of the Californian aristocracy have been educated in Paris at the Convent of the Sacred Heart. The French note is indeed firmly struck in the West. You find small children, who, reared by foreign governesses, are more at ease with the Latin languages than with their own. And, to choose but one very symptomatic example, nowhere did the temporary cessation lately in *L'Illustration* of the publication of the latest plays upon the Parisian stage cause greater discomfort and emptiness of life than in California. As for the volumes of our latest poets and *vers-libristes*, they lie even thicker upon library tables in California than in Kansas. Universities dot the plain, and one of the world's great libraries is soon to be among the orange-groves near Pasadena. Culture is certainly not treated rough near the Pacific's shore.

Bret Harte was, and Alfred Henry Lewis. Their West is gone. Yet there remains California, which, though certainly not Western as we once used the word, is most Californian. And Californianism is something as amazing and as different as Westernism can ever have

been in that earlier day. It is a subject which would well repay years of loving and intent study, and demands, indeed, space and some epic gift of style, yet must be treated here briefly and as best may be. The gospel of impressionism is in the end the only defense of any alien writer attempting to describe a social landscape; he sets the thing down *as it looks to him*.

The Californians, in spite of their comparative hauteur in the Pullman, are accessible enough. Many of them, even on the transcontinental trip, may be "met." Indeed, they travel freely, constantly, and easily to and fro, making nothing of four nights out to Chicago, and training their infant progeny, as may richly be observed in the train, to the same happy facility of movement. (It should be said, parenthetically, that as far as that goes, all over the country motherhood seems merely to incite American women to travel, by preference in sleeping-cars.) These returning Californians have been East for various alleged purposes of business or pleasure. But it is really as missionaries that they have gone, to bring the bright gospel of Californianism to those benighted races which still persist in living east of the High Sierras.

The universal delusion of the Pacific slope is that California is heaven. And indeed



Traces of old Spain have a winning, half pathetic charm.



there is so much to support the theory that it merits calm and judicial examination. The beauty of the Californian landscape is indisputable and heavenly. The combination of sea and mountains with the adorable valleys which diversify it beneath an almost perpetually cloudless sky, the great woodland regions, the majesty and wonder of the High Sierras—all these are unrivaled, unmatched by anything in our land. There is a curious Mediterranean quality in the country; one loses oneself inevitably in golden memories of Greece, of Italy, and of the sunburned coast of Spain. Something classic, too; under that crystalline air everything is sharply modeled. Marble temples should crown the hills, and in the glades nymphs disport themselves. Claude should have lived to paint this land, to do justice to its serene perfection.

Serenity is perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Californian scene—the sun shines, a faint breeze blows gently, and the hills lie in the clear light as if nothing on them had stirred since they were first chiseled in brown or green. There is nothing wayward or mysterious about the landscape. The air is too crystalline to bear upon it tangs and odors. You have moments of thinking that there *is* no air; that all California is broad, kindly vacancy filled with sunlight and no

more. To the sense of serenity is added the feeling of remoteness. In certain moods the Californian climate, even at its loveliest, seems wholly impersonal, if one may venture upon that expression.

The Californian dooryards everywhere are a riot of tropical and sub-tropical blooming plants; perhaps nowhere in the world is there anything like the lushness of their growth and the profusion of their blossoming. To any flower-lover these are gardens in paradise. Yet in no sense is California the tropics. Even when the days are hot the nights are most often crisp and cold. There is no languor in the air. The night breeze does not whisper of the dark magic of the South, of hot passions and unbridled pleasures. It is not, in short, the Californian zephyrs which fill the Californian divorce courts. Instead, they seem clean, properly sterilized, even cold-storage airs.

The Pacific, too, a calm, cold ocean not much fretted by traffic, adds its curious note of aloofness. It sends forth fogs, but somehow they carry no hint of salt. And in days of sunshine when it sparkles sapphire blue it seems somehow to exhale no breath. You never "smell the sea" as by the Atlantic's verge, and, though you well know that rotting seaweed gives forth that odor, you miss it on



this western shore. The oceans you have known seem playful children, by turns gay and irritable, by comparison with this monstrous, lovely, inhuman sea. If you are by fate predestined to Californianism, you find in this eternal changeless quality a suggestion that happiness, too, may be everlasting, and that behind the mountains you have left forever change and whim and anxiety and all the responsibilities of the past.

The first impression of California must be for every one a sense of release, whether it be merely from the winter climate of Iowa or from the carking cares of the eastern seaboard. Every one is, as it were, under a new flag and a new name, ready to forget the past and keep clear eyes fixed only on the future. Here every earthly care may be sloughed off, except, perhaps, the pangs of love. And as for physical ills, these should easily be disposed of. On every hand there are faith healers of all varieties, divine healers, nature healers, and child healers, these last an agreeable novelty ranging from ten to fourteen years in age, but competent, no doubt, as only an American child can be.

The Californian population has been recruited from all parts of the country and, though happy in this new environment, still bears traces of its origin. A Boston lady,



lately viewing a parade in honor of the sovereigns of Belgium, said it made her feel at home to "see all them silk hats"; yet she was doubtless a converted and ardent Californian, finding this in her old age a pleasant shelter from the east wind.

One of the pleasantest things about California (perhaps, after its natural beauty) is the simplicity of life so widely prevalent there. Of course there are plenty of enormously rich people, and quite enough extraordinarily gay and fashionable. Yet in the end it is the paradise of the common people and the small income. Even when the immigrant to California comes with work in his mind it is so often some sublimated and poetic industry like orange-growing which has lured; the culture of that golden fruit, with Mexicans or Japanese doing the manual labor, is an ideal, easy, and Arcadian occupation for any one.

The bungalow should be the emblem of California, it represents the state at its simplest and most engaging best. It is the great triumph of native art, triumphantly ugly sometimes, sometimes triumphantly gay and coquettish. When the architects of other states, less bungalowish, need models they visit the Pacific coast for inspiration. Indeed, the Californian bungalow is the prettiest imaginable proof that there is a modest and simple

and self-respecting life to be led in Arcadian surroundings, embowered in bloom, and that the servantless home is both decent and agreeable.

In this matter of the elimination of the servant—and so of the servant problem—if one may trust the report of Californian housewives, the state has gone further than others in the direction desired by all advanced and radical advocates of the suppression of class distinctions. Broadly speaking, they will tell you, there are no servants in California. It is hard to believe of the palaces, though you hear yarns of mid-Western millionaires assisting their wives with the dishes or sweeping out the gorgeous corridors of their castles. In the two-room bungalow (three rooms make it almost a house) a servant would only be in the way.

How can one fear any future social convulsions once one has learned how delightful it is to eat in the kitchen, in a charming little stall with benches, like those in the Old Cheshire Cheese in London, only now trig and gay with white and colored paints. Every most modern device for the harnessing of gas, water, and the electric current you are apt to find in the tiniest bungalow temple of the simple life. Why dislike washing the clothes when a machine does it? What is ironing but

play when the ironing-board lets down from the wall at the touch of a button and an electric iron, ever hot, stands temptingly to your hand?

Of course there are plenty of rich people in California—the sight-seeing automobiles take you past miles of “homes,” all the seats of lumber, paper, packing, chewing-gum, or sawdust “kings,” as we so delightfully term all our successful business men in America. But the really exciting and significant thing is to go past the hundreds of miles of “homes” of those humble people who are not and never will be “kings,” never, perhaps, be masters of anything but their own souls, but are leading a serene, neighborly, American existence. It is in this mood that the bungalow seems the solution of all the difficulties of even a revolutionized future. California seems somehow to offer every tired human creature from that humming, tormented East a refuge and a new chance.

The simplicity of life pervades the whole social structure. There are in the Californian cities large general-market stores on the main shopping streets, just next the jewelers’ and the picture-palaces and the milliners’ *modes de Paris*. There is an enormous deal of marketing in person, and, incredible as it may sound to Eastern readers, there appears to be some at-

tempt to attain low prices in the belief that they will attract Californians as high prices do New-Yorkers. After doing your marketing you may repair to dine, at about five-thirty or a leisurely and fashionable six, to a cafeteria, where again self-service is the desired goal. These establishments are enormous and in that vast, flashing elegance of style which they have borrowed from the hotel "office." There are luxurious waiting-rooms where you keep rendezvous with the party with whom you are to cafeteer. Bands blare away, and in certain advanced futuristic establishments there are balconies with easy chairs where even those not dining are welcome to sit and enjoy the art of music.

Nature-loving is of course a cheap and simple pleasure anywhere, but it peculiarly fits into the scheme of Western frugality and soulfulness. Of course California has no monopoly; even in central Illinois bands of nature-lovers now go forth on Saturday afternoons to caress trees. But probably never before in the same area were so many almost professional devotees of the Great Mother as on the Pacific slope. There is, of course, a vast deal of rather windy talk upon the subject, and a strong disposition to dilute it with a vague religiosity. Even rich and fashionable ladies at Santa Barbara are apt to yearn a good

deal over the beauty of the landscape, spiritually to fondle Rincon, the local mountain, and, in short, to feel that this close contact with nature is making both soul and body very lovely.

But there is a side simpler and more engaging. There is an extraordinary proportion of the inhabitants of California which knows the wild places—they are always astonishingly near the centers of population—and has been near the mysteries. The coming of the good road and the bad car has facilitated this. The migration in the summer to the High Sierras of thousands of family camping-parties, in overloaded vehicles of the many kinds which may be generically grouped as tin cars, is an epic of democracy. They live long weeks really close to that so famous heart; a young lady was heard in the autumn complaining that she couldn't seem to cook at the sea-level—she had learned the art during a long summer twelve thousand feet up, where water boils at a lower temperature and is much less hot! Camping and all the pioneer crafts are still a real part of the life of a true Californian from childhood on.

Even week-ends and Sundays are used in pleasant outdoor expeditions. In spite of the automobile, the Californians can still walk. Of course they do not use such an old-

fashioned expression; they "hike"; this new word, as Boy Scouts have already found, makes a thing that had grown dull a real pleasure. The railway and trolley stations late Saturday afternoon are an amazing sight. They swarm with boys and girls in "hiking" costumes of khaki. The young ladies are all in trim, tight knickers, to be distinguished from the young men only by their superior shape, by their beauty of countenance, and by the students' caps in bright colored velvet which surmount them. There are undoubtedly more young ladies in knickers in California than anywhere else in the world. In some cases there is a woman in skirts along; this strange raiment possibly indicates the chaperon, though more often it would appear that the expedition is undertaken in that Arcadian lack of guile which is still so strong a national characteristic. Did Daphnis and Chloe "hike"? The young ladies are almost always, by a mysterious but welcome dispensation of Providence, small and exquisitely pretty—indeed, they look like moving-picture actresses, which is, of course, the highest Californian praise. And the whole scene has a quality of musical comedy which is gay and invigorating.

Indeed, while we touch this point, it may be said that Californian costume, more par-

ticularly that of the male, is very free from any conservative or traditional restraint. It may be that in the south the mode is affected by the presence of a great number of actors—a race always sprightly and debonair in dress. For example, it is probable that in Los Angeles there are more black-and-white-check suits per square mile than in any other city in the world. Sartorial imagination seems positively unbridled; what a French tailor would, so accurately, call *costumes de fantaisie* are excessively prevalent, and all that can be done with belts and waists and curves and gussets and gores and strapped and plaited waistcoats is done. Fits are, to display the perfect male figure, alluringly snug—a leading Eastern authority says that the impression he receives is that every one is wearing the suit made for little brother! The note, not universally but still most commonly struck, is not that of stern simplicity. It is actually a fact that in one great Californian city a perfectly plain white dress shirt is not to be purchased in any reputable men's furnishing shop, the mode being for a touch of embroidery or plaiting or piqué. Dashing fellows, these Californians!

As bungalows and dress and the whole manner of Californian life indicate an eye wholly fixed on the future, so does the Cali-



fornian language. English as she used to be spoken is in process of being scrapped in California—or perhaps it is only that institutions which never existed before demand names as fresh as themselves. “Cafeteria” has, of course, now a nation-wide use, but there is also an “Eateria” and, in one instance, welling straight from our strange, turgid, national fount of humor, a “Palace of Fine Eats.” “Grocerteria” is very much in use everywhere, for a shop where “self-service” is in vogue. “Shoeitorium” and “Shinerium” are delightful and easily understood, as is “Vegeteria” for a wayside vegetable-stall. “Hometeria” as the designation of a real-estate office is perhaps fancy spun rather fine and flung rather far. But for a stroke of individual inventive genius it would be hard to beat “Rabbitorium,” the mart for these succulent animals. The language never grows rusty out West.

The Spanish past of California, is, of course, much advertised and carefully conserved. The little towns and the string of missions were perhaps not very important in those early days; they must have seemed remote and provincial to the proud City of Mexico. And the relics which one so tenderly and piously visits are, as things go in the world, relatively unimportant—in Spain itself one would perhaps not cross a very broad

street to see them. But here in America we are hungry for the past, and the Californian traces of old Spain have a very winning, half-pathetic charm. They complete the romantic illusion that these are Mediterranean lands.

And modern California has done everything to keep the old Spanish province everywhere in mind. There are "mission" plays and "mission" groceries and "mission" garages and, as all America knows to its sorrow, mission furniture. That famous and delightful novel, *Ramona*, has become an authentic part of California history by now, and every event has been given a local habitat so that you can make pilgrimages, pretty and romantic, to every scene of the heroine's happiness and of her final tragedy—a charming tribute to the art of fiction. The town and street names are so many of them reminiscent of that early day, and the Californians, slipshod in their English sometimes, are astonishingly careful of their Spanish, undaunted by such names as La Jolla, for example, and dealing competently with the aspirate j and the liquid double l. The whole system of nomenclature makes for romance, and the presence, as one goes toward the south and the Mexican border, of increasing numbers of a darker, more picturesque race deepens the impression

which one has at moments that one is in a foreign land.

The Chinese and Japanese do that, too. No discussion shall here ensue of that Asiatic problem. Not as economist, but as idle tourist, may one be grateful for such memories as that of a carnation-field in bloom tended by a half-dozen pretty little Japanese women, bending caressingly over the lovely brilliant flowers!

This, however, is a digression from Spanishness, and the point to be made was that earthquakes and speculative builders have left little in California of the period between the mission and the bungalow. There is one lady in southern California who is famous because her grandchildren are being brought up in the house where she herself was born! There is, in short, nothing mid-Victorian in California, unless it be possibly some aspects of the famous San Franciscan vice—in that city the rows of *cabinets particuliers* which adorn even the humblest oyster-house inevitably make one think of the Third Empire in Paris and the *Bal Mabille*.

Reluctantly shall some space be here given to this same question of Californian morals. It is amusing how cultivated and dashing and intelligent it is always thought in America

to attack towns as being puritanical. Los Angeles was once termed "chemically pure," and it still reels from the blow. The Iowan population would like it to be well understood that life has been considerably jazzed up since its transference to the coast. San Francisco has, on the other hand, been perhaps too much advertised by its loving but injudicious friends, for it is quite plain to even the tourist's eye that, instead of being the Isle of Cytherea, the place is congested with good and respectable women (often excessively pretty and smart), and that it goes its way, as a busy, lively city should, with not much more nor much less of undue gayety than usually falls to the lot of towns of its size. Yet up and down the length of the state you hear philosophical thinkers asserting that California saps the moral sense.

(Here, indeed, one had best not be too sure that the wish is not father to the thought. There are ladies who have not succeeded in being very bad in the East and, arriving at full bloom and California about the same time, have come with the hope of misconduct springing eternal in their very human breasts.)

It is true that the Californian divorce courts are by way of surpassing old days in Reno, and that life in many a community proceeds with great freedom and vivacity; that one-piece



A superannuated cowboy of about eighty.



bathing-suits are the rule, and that, to judge by the photographs which embellish the *chronique scandaleuse* of the local newspapers, neither age nor plainness offers any bar to the liveliness of ladies. But at the risk of defending Californians even against themselves, it must be said if the state saps the moral sense it is only in so far as it weakens *all* feeling of responsibility and of dependence upon the traditions of the past.

The visitor to California will inevitably experience moods in which the whole state will seem to him populated merely by people who have migrated thither to avoid responsibility. He will forget the industries and the rich agriculture and consider the whole state as an idle community, unproductive and non-creative. He will in imagination see the tributary stream of money from the working East cross the mountains and break into pretty, many-colored spray over the Californian lotos gardens. He will wonder what would happen to the West if the machinery of capitalism ceased to divert this life-giving golden flow. He will revolt at what seems the sterile happiness of a whole people.

It is in such moods that one believes the worst stories of the slowness with which California awakened to the call of the Great War, forgetting how, at home in the East, one was



bitterly impatient at the country's lethargy and neglecting, perhaps, to inform oneself of the splendid achievements of the aroused California. Yet the mood, dissipated, will return, of longing, even in the Californian sunshine and beauty, for the cloudier skies of an older, struggling, suffering world.

Reference has been made earlier to the prevalent delusion that California is heaven. And here something must be said, in all reverence it is hoped, about heaven. The Californian resemblance is to that place of the earlier theologies devoted wholly to the mystic and rather static pleasures of worship and praise, which most of the vigorous modern churches reject in favor of an ideal of more activity, more strain, more likeness to the life of this world, though on a higher spiritual plane.

A Californian might, however, well retort that the higher spiritual plane already exists by the Pacific's edge. Indeed, the soil of the state is as fertile of religions as that of great Asia. And, indeed, all the Asiatic cults find a welcome there. In grand and beautiful temples or in dull little frame houses on side streets where a simple home-made signboard gives modest publicity to a new religion devised by the inhabitant himself, all sorts and all doctrines find some shelter. From a Sun-

day newspaper, which only partially reflects the possibilities of a Californian Sabbath morning, is copied out a list of services which includes, besides the more orthodox names, New Thought, Higher Thought, Metaphysical Theosophy of several different schools, Pillar of Fire, Old Time Orthodoxy, God is Female, and, though it is more a cultural activity than a worship of the Deity, Raw Food. By the western ocean all these new religionists gather to await the coming of a new day. Some of them believe that from the deep bosom of the Pacific will arise a new continent, like the lost Atlantis. When this happens they will be there to step still farther into the sunset, and to take possession of a newer and better California.

There is more "soul" in California than there has ever been before in the world's history. A tailor advertises: "All men wearing tailor-made clothes should insist on getting a soul with them. Every garment made in our shops, including coat, vest, and trousers, is provided with a real soul, the something that lives forever and the something that is not obtainable everywhere"!

All these western religions are religions of optimism; it is only natural that they should thrive best in these remote, untroubled airs. Their practitioners are relentlessly cheerful;

you can tell that almost professional smile and that voice dripping with honey even in the crowded street-car. Their lilac crystal domes stand in fantastic loveliness above the western sea. Why, in a land where the present presents no cares and problems, should not the human heart concern itself with some future life?

Is California itself not the future life? We come inevitably to what we earlier called her delusion. Perhaps the Californian serenity is what the world is now trying for. In that case our West is a great mile-stone on the highroad of the human race. And when human cares are adjusted, then, as now, her hills will turn green and brown and then green again. And her sunshine will never have ceased to flood her great calm spaces. And her giant sequoias will have increased in girth an inch or two— Perhaps in time that fabled continent will rise from the Pacific's bosom. But until a great deal is known about it most of us will prefer California.

## The Hotel Guest

A MERICA invented the hotel and is still inordinately proud of it. Europe through the centuries produced, it is true, refreshment for man and beast, and comfortable phrases about taking one's ease in one's inn. But it remained for our country to contrive an establishment where, if we may venture upon an illogical but perhaps understandable expression, one took not only one's own ease but every one else's; where privacy having been, as far as possible, eliminated, the hotel guest lived in a pleasant sociable democratic welter of all the classes of the community.

In one of Long Island's prettiest country palaces, surrounded by formal gardens, clipped hedges, espaliered pear-trees, and pools made sapphire blue by the newest chemicals, filled with the loot of Europe, the main living-room has a tessellated marble floor mellowed with age which the owner whimsically announces was secured not in some foreign nobleman's residence, but at the demolition of the metropolis's once most famous hotel. The

imaginative guest cannot tread it unmoved; in the dim hours of the night he can hear the ghosts of America's great days stirring upon what was once its noble expanse, seeking their favorite chairs or asking the clerk for writing-paper. If a simple symbol for America is sought, for that American America which sprang into being with the Revolution, came triumphant and reunited through the Civil War and the Reconstruction days and has lately uncovered and fanned into flame the ancient fires which still burned at her heart, teaching her new foreign-born sons her old love of liberty, perhaps nothing better can be found than the old hotel office grandiose, almost epic in qualities with its stretch of checkered black-and-white marble pavement upon which America congregated. It was what the Forum perhaps was to Rome, and if majestic memories of the lobby of the Grand Hotel in Cincinnati, seen in an impressionable childhood, are at all to be trusted, about the Forum's size.

The European mind is still completely bewildered by the free-and-easy and unquestioned use of the hotel and all its conveniences by thousands who dispense with the formality of lodging there or contributing in any financial way to its maintenance. A Saturday of this last winter the office of one of New York's

most expensive and exclusive hotels became so congested that hoarse-voiced uniformed attendants kept shouting, "Keep moving," as if they were policemen in charge of proletarian crowds in the street. At such a moment actual guests of a hotel are intruding aliens. In spite of all modern improvements and all pretensions to affording an elegant privacy for its guests, the American hotel remains to-day the prey of the public, its office the public's lounge and rendezvous.

There have been attempts to keep out of the best hotels, not so much the local public as the inhabitants of cheaper hostelries. In spite of these, the frugal visitor to New York traditionally "put up" at a small hotel on a side street and picked his teeth on the old Astor House steps. And at the summer and winter resorts to this day, guests of the boarding-house calmly repair in bands to pass the evening on the verandas of the best hotels, and it is practically impossible to say them nay, so firmly fixed in our national mind is the idea that every part of a hotel not actually locked up is public property.

To lounge in a first-class office confers a certain position. Even in the most modern hotels young gentleman socially ambitious are said to gain at little expense a most desirable publicity by having themselves "paged" (de-

lightful word) in the public rooms and restaurants at the most crowded hours.

Another of the common people's inalienable rights is to know who is staying in a hotel, hence the pitiless publicity of the register. This volume is indeed at times the center of hotel social life, its perusal the daily pleasure of hundreds. In the earlier days, wits found their opportunity here. At Trenton Falls, a once famous but now almost forgotten resort, this passage in the register was much liked:

John Graham and servant.

G. Squires, wife and two babies. No servant, owing to the hardness of the times.

G. W. Douglas and servant. No wife and babies, owing to the hardness of the times.

Even though you neglect the opportunity to turn a pretty phrase, perhaps the only way to make sure that your name is down correctly is to write it yourself. Memories come back to all of us of strange mistakes in foreign hotels. And it is well to remember the dignified and respectable Bostonian writer on musical subjects whose arrival at Tunis in North Africa was recorded in the little local *Gazette des Étrangers et du Casino* as that of *Le Marquis A— de Boston et sa Suite*.

The Ladies' Parlor, alas, has gone, to make



way for the cabaret grill-room where the ladies may smoke and drink pink cocktails; but for the better part of that great nineteenth century it was a prominent and agreeable feature of hotel life. All the foreign visitors of that earlier ante-bellum period—whose inevitable books of impressions are an ever more fascinating store of information as to the manners and customs we derive from—were by turns horrified and bedazzled by the amiable and accessible society in the hotel parlors. Below, in the office, the rough male inhabitants of the Republic swore and chewed and spat, but above, American ladies, beautifully dressed in Parisian frocks, held a decorous but animated court. In Europe, no such public reception-rooms existed, no such nightly assemblage of guests inclined to sociability. In Europe, no families lived permanently in hotels, and this publicity of home life added, for the stranger, to the wonder of the experience.

Miss Fredrika Bremer, a Swedish lady famous enough in her day, but now quite forgotten, may be quoted to advantage on the parlors of the Astor House:

Magnificent drawing-rooms with furniture in velours, with mirrors and gilding, brilliant with magnificent gas-lighted chandeliers and other grandeur stand open in every story of

the house for ladies and gentlemen who live here or are visiting here, to converse or to rest, talking together on soft and splendid sofas or arm-chairs, fanning themselves, and just as if they had nothing else to do in the world than to make themselves agreeable to one another. Scarcely can a lady rise than immediately a gentleman is at hand to offer her his arm.

The last touch is admirable. This is in 1849, in what might perhaps be thought a roguish period in America's manners, yet it is humbly submitted that the picture of the Ladies' Parlor of the Astor House compares favorably with that of any *salon* of that eighteenth century in France, the period which is said to have been for the privileged classes the most agreeable this planet has yet provided. Even the most *belle marquise* could have hoped for nothing more courteous than a gentleman immediately at hand to offer his arm almost before she could rise.

This is perhaps the point to meet any possible challenge as to the importance of such facts and such philosophizing. Here is not history stately and proud, only some pleasant odds and ends which may help to make her great pages more comprehensive and more human. European history has many collateral volumes of gossip and agreeable minor infor-

mation. So, too, has our earlier Colonial period. But there is a stretch of this nineteenth century to know which better and more familiarly would make Americans more at home in their own continent, would certainly enrich the tone of our national culture, and would perhaps even heighten our love of country. *Nihil Americanum mihi alienum*—a serious plea is made here that even the times of the now despised house with a cupola deserve our affectionate, if half-humorous attention; that indeed a record of any of our manners and customs, such as is planned in this series of scattered articles is, though both light and humble, still a genuine contribution, at least memoirs, to serve for the writing of our national history.

While there is still time, every one should see the Ladies' Parlor of a certain famous hotel at Saratoga, still coquettish with gilt mirrors and ragged blue brocade, and should make the pilgrimage to an equally famous inn at Niagara Falls, if only to see the fat old leather-bound registers in which honeymoon couples with imagination still occasionally hunt to see where father and mother, or more probably grandfather and grandmother, signed the book on their wedding-trip—where they, too, may see when Abraham Lincoln brought his bride to the Falls. Here is his-

tory intimate and sweet, the grave muse ready to make friends with any idle sentimental tourist.

The colonial inn, though pleasant with memories of travelers by coach and of solitary and gallant horsemen, is still perfectly in the English tradition. Revolutionary days when French officers visited us as they do now, are fuller of delightful anecdote. The Marquis de Chastellux, on leaving a New Jersey inn, writes:

I observed to Mr. Courtheath that if he made me pay for being waited on by his pretty sister, it was by much too little, but if only for lodging and supper, it was a great deal.

They had a way with them, did those Frenchmen! It was said of the young Prince de Broglie, traveling about that time, that he "managed very well by kissing the landladies, so he got clean sheets and no other traveler to sleep with him!" It is interesting to look over General Putnam's bill at the Cromwell's Head Tavern and notice the curious distribution of his expenses. His board cost him two pounds eight shillings for the week, his liquor sixteen shillings, and his washing ninepence!

All this European character disappeared in the first few decades of the new century. In

that dark age the Simon-pure American hotel with elegant Ladies' Parlors, huge offices, shining cuspidors, and rocking-chairs on the sidewalk, came mysteriously into being, and the foreign traveler was inevitably transported with amazement, often with horror, at living in daily association with three or four hundred people. One European traveler asserted: "Americans love crowds. There are even more twins born there than anywhere else." Size indeed developed early. At Trenton Falls, N. P. Willis saw with amazement two thousand wild pigeons fattening for the hotel. The hotels in towns were larger than anything the world had ever known before; hotels in such resorts as Saratoga were monstrous, unbelievable. Turmoil came, too; a large hotel is described as one of the class "entitled to keep a gong," and as early as the 'fifties, bands played loudly in the Cape May dining-rooms, and hundreds of black waiters marched in with each course in military order. There is at Cape May a Homeric legend of a battle royal between white gentlemen and black waiters on strike!

The foreign visitors expressed horror often enough, but the legend of American uncouthness was, quite obviously, exaggerated to give spice to their narratives. In 1843 the famous English actor, Macready, records that he went

with Longfellow and the Willises to dine at what he quaintly terms the "Ladies' Ordinary" of a New York hotel.

"I looked for the eaters with knives," he ingenuously and honestly says, "but detected none."

Mrs. Trollope, whose attacks on us roused such bitterness, is to-day somewhat discredited. We must simply decline, for example, to believe that in her day it was considered so indelicate for the sexes to sit together on the grass, that picnics were impossible. Indeed, do we not know from equally reliable witnesses that at this same period at the New Jersey seaside a gentleman asked a lady, "May I have the pleasure of taking a bath with you?" as he would have solicited the favor of a dance, and that in the waves the sexes mixed with a freedom which makes the story of the contemporaneous squeamishness about a picnic quite improbable?

In this mysterious period of development, early in the century, a new hotel language was invented, and strange, inexplicable terms had birth.

"Why do you call me Front?" asks the new bell-boy in the farce. "Why don't you call me Grimes?"

"I don't know," the clerk candidly answers. "It's always done in first-class hotels."



The old hotel office was what the forum perhaps was to Rome.





A traveler naturally must grow excited about something and find fault with some foreign custom. How else is he to know that he is abroad? Of this importance, and no more, are the anecdotes of visitors recoiling before the awful sight of boiled eggs "mashed in a glass" and the remark of Thackeray after trying his first American oyster, that he "felt as if he had swallowed a baby."

There is no intention here of going into the long chapter of American difficulties with European hotels. We have been as violent over the folly of the French and Italians in not serving an American breakfast as ever their travelers have been over our eccentricities. Any one who has tried to play courier to an inveterately American friend can understand how difficult it is, say, in a remote Brittany hamlet, to obtain Smithson's Breakfast Food, or whatever it is which adorns the home table in Kansas City, and how hard it is to induce a landlady at Vallombrosa to fry the morning beefsteak to a turn. On the whole, foreigners visiting us have borne the reversal of their immemorial habits with fortitude, even good nature.

Instead of cause for horror, the travelers, it is evident, often found a strange, exotic charm in the American hotel. The waiters were invariably black, the chambermaids in-

evitably Irish. On the sidewalks in front of New York hotels, Cuban planters rocked. The society in the Ladies' Parlors sparkled. In the dining-rooms Gargantuan menus of strange foods tempted and satiated every appetite. Ice-water clinked and indigestion stalked. Pale, precocious children competently ordering their own dinner tore soft-shell crabs limb from limb, gnawed green corn, and consumed limitless ice-cream. It was indeed the New World.

Until Mr. Hoover, quite lately, took the matter in hand, almost nothing had ever checked our national extravagance, and the hotel, as perhaps the freest flowering of our institutions, excelled in wastefulness, both for the guests and for the casual public. In some Florida hotels, up to a comparatively recent period, great baskets of oranges for free eating stood in the offices, while in the early annals of Wisconsin you may read of a custom of serving free whisky to all guests, more especially if the house was so crowded that many of them had to be put to bed upon the floor—a custom that will become more golden in memory as the prohibition years go by.

Even to-day, when time has somewhat curbed us, the ideal of the American hotel is perhaps a famous establishment in the country near New York where you pay a fixed sum a

day (fixed out of the reach of most of us), and the hotel provides everything you can think of to want—cigars, champagne, riding-horses, motors, fishing parties, picnics in the mountain-top, dances, private theatricals, and probably even that monstrosity, a feather bed, if it suited your convenience.

The constant outcry of the American tourist abroad used to be not so-much against high prices as against the itemized bill. Mr. Nat Goodwin, in the farce, said, "No, this is not my hotel—yet; I am buying it on the instalment plan." The charge for candles in European hotels did more to promote international discord than almost anything else that ever happened abroad. At home in America we are happy only when soap is provided and talcum powder and wash-cloths to take away, and sample bottles of mouth wash and tiny tubes of cold cream, when the supply of towels is limitless and the hot water gushes like the Great Geyser of the Yellowstone. At table, our ideal is to stoke up between courses on celery and olives and salted nuts, and discover peppermint candy hiding beside the finger-bowl, and to find nothing of all this on the bill.

And yet, in the end, in spite of itself, the American public was betrayed. It was found that hotel life could really be made more ex-

pensive by charging for rooms and meals separately; the old ideal was sacrificed to this greater and more alluring extravagance. You began to pay for your room alone more than in the grand old days of the "two, three, or four dollar a day house" you paid for it plus three banquets a day, and at meal-times to subject yourself to the extortions of an *à la carte* restaurant with alleged French waiters. Of course, it was possible to use this new system for economy—there were people from the Waldorf breakfasting at Childs'—but in the main it served extravagance.

There was a transition period when the two plans sometimes existed alongside in the same hotel. There is a story, if not true, at least agreeably contrived, of Mr. Israel Zangwill registering in Chicago and being astonished by the clerk's asking him, sharply:

"European or American?"

"I'm European," he replied, "but I don't see what business that is of yours!"

Gradually, however, the so-called European plan (in the early idiom it was often pronounced with the accent on the second syllable) became almost universal in city hotels of standing. Even the least refined commercial traveler is now revolted by the un-New-Yorkishness of the old American plan, which is now surviving vigorously only in

country and resort hotels (and the visitor to our crowded watering places knows that even there its hold is precarious).

If the hotel is, as it were, the barometer and thermometer of national civilization, it is the commercial traveler who most often takes the readings. Let no one underestimate his importance in the nation's structure. In Charles H. Hoyt's early farce, "A Bunch of Keys," Dolly, complaining, draws a most racily American picture. "Ever since the hotel was closed," she says, "I've had a most miserable time. There's been no drummers along, and I've had nobody to flirt with but brakemen." She would be glad, were she in a newer play, to recognize how her friend has improved the hotel. The drummer is the hotels' best regular patron. He supports them when the traveler for pleasure cannot be counted upon. He knows metropolitan comfort and is willing to pay for it, or at least to put it on the expense account. Some of the new hotels in the new South frankly acknowledge their indebtedness. "The hotel the traveling-man made possible," is the phrase which calls for our gratitude. We must not think of him lightly; even in the hotel bedroom the free copy of the Bible has been provided by the "Gideons," an association of piously inclined gentlemen of the road. In England the

"commercial room" may still exist for the segregation of the fraternity, and it may be that in hotels in small Italian towns female travelers are still given private dining-rooms rather than that they should be exposed to association with the commercial travelers in the main *sala da pranzo*. But in America, the most delicately nurtured women gladly follow them to the grill-rooms and lounges on the New York plan which they have demanded everywhere. Tablets honoring the drummer should indeed be placed on the walls of every new and comfortable hotel.

The process of civilizing the hotel wilderness occasionally leads the most sophisticated products of New York and Paris to the loneliest frontier posts. In a central New York hotel, there was a few years ago a French head waiter of that engaging suavity which makes life's troubles melt away. Asked one day at lunch to convey to the chef a compliment upon a really notable *suprême de sole, Marguery*, he sighed delicately and then said:

"Yes, he is an expert and admirable man. But he will not last long as a cook. What will you?" he continued with a little weary shrug. "How can he sustain his art among a clientèle which really only wishes a planked beef-steak?"

How can a head waiter last, we may well



ask, whose advice is sought only to decide perhaps between French-fried and hashed-brown potatoes to go with the ham and eggs? Martyrs each to the cause of American good living! The story of a Dieppe boy comes into the mind, too, who made a failure as manager of an ambitious French restaurant in a pretentious new hotel in an obstinately ham-and-egg town, whose pretty young wife was made love to by a local auto-tire manufacturer, and who finally put a bullet through his head, discouraged, beaten, and lonely for the pretty gay town where pleasant little old hotels went on in the good traditional way, and where a small, sure, happy life would have been his had he been content to stay at home by the blue French sea. This is probably the only record which will ever be made of Raoul. There is a mother in France who remembers him, if she be still alive. It would be pleasant if she could for a moment believe that America was grateful for the small service her boy tried so hard to do for his adopted country.

The transformation which the motor-car has effected in the hotels of the American country is already a twice and thrice told tale, and yet no bird's-eye view of the hotel guest can omit the sight of him and his womankind in strange masks and hideous wrappings ap-

proaching Ye Olde Inne and demanding rooms with bath. More wayside taverns have been plumbed into a new existence than any one could ever have believed Colonial traffic could have sustained. As for historic memories, they are a cloud, like dust along an un-oiled dirt road. One can motor for weeks and always lie the night where Washington once slept. Our national past has surged back, and what with "innes" and tea-rooms, quaintness is in danger of becoming a pest.

There are, however, certain developments in this new roadside hotel-keeping which should be set down by any serious student of our manners. The amateur landlady, an artistic gentlewoman in a sage-green woolen gown, cut low over a neck artistically hung with amber beads, is something which only the Anglo-Saxon world can produce. She tends to serve food in green bowls and there is nothing in the animal or vegetable kingdom which with the aid of a bottle of mayonnaise she cannot whip into a salad. Her passion is for daintiness, in which is comprised, thank God, cleanliness. She has a pretty taste in all the arts, and indeed a stay under her roof cannot fail to be mentally and spiritually tonic. She is an agreeable, if faintly comic, figure; we should value her as the impersonation of a passionate revolt against the dullness, the

unpicturesqueness of the old American country hotel of the last half of the nineteenth century. And our new American quaintness, brought about by skilled architects, trained landscape-gardeners, and sophisticated interior decorators can successfully challenge comparison with any of the Old World's cleverness.

Novelists and playwrights have for some time encouraged the hotel run by an eccentric local "character." After Frank Stockton told us of the Squirrel Inn, some enterprising person immediately started one so named, and now every one who saw the play in New York last winter wants to go this summer to a hotel kept by "Lightnin'." We are tolerant of fantastic landlords; there is a Floridian hotel where the host plays Chopin on the parlor piano while a soviet of servants and guests runs the establishment.

In the new town hotels, the guest asks not quaintness, but a kind of communal grandeur. The new establishments are fabulous. They provide special floors for bachelors, and, for ladies traveling alone, a chaperon-matron. They have club-rooms for Spanish-Americans, Indian chefs for the curries, stenographers, notary publics, Turkish baths, safe-deposit vaults for the guests, their own artesian wells, manicurists among whom Helen of

Troy would be unnoticed, roof gardens, subterranean dancing-rooms, cigarettes for ladies, red-tipped so that the lip rouge may not rub off and show, private detectives, house osteopaths and divorce lawyers, gymnasiums on the roof, playgrounds for children, swimming baths, jazz and symphony bands, near-bars and soda-fountains, their own valets and tailors, ladies' maids, packers, ticket agents and scalpers, blackmailers, night guides, and almost everything except surgeons' rooms for major operations and wet nurses for children born in the hotel. Once safely within the doors of a modern hotel, there is really no need of one's ever leaving it, except for the last sad rites, and possibly the hotel could take care of even these. The hotel is the epitome of the nation, even to the elaborate system of mirrors and electric signals cunningly hidden beneath the velvet carpets by means of which the estimable matrons on each floor are enabled to supervise and preserve the morals of the nation.

We went through a period when it was no longer quite "the thing" to live in a hotel. But now that domestic servants in private houses are rapidly disappearing, if not already gone, it appears likely that the hotel is about to engulf the American world. In New York last winter, new hotels were opened at a rate

which increased the available bedrooms at some preposterous rate, perhaps a thousand a week, and yet the town every day was filled with frenzied, despairing people vainly hunting for places to lay their heads at night. Waiters struck, imperial-mannered waitresses took their place, and yet the one universal desire in New York seemed to be to live in a hotel. When we consider, as indeed we had best do, the possible complete passing away in the not distant future of all private and domestic service, this rush of a whole people to hotels becomes epic in quality and significance. American hotels have always put unbelievable splendor within reach of the whole community. And as every change prepared by our radicals and revolutionists is in a sense an extension of this principle, the hotel is perhaps the symbol of the future, a people's palace in the office of which the proletariat takes its ease.

Meanwhile, counter to this great principle of democracy, hotels, like their guests, have developed social position and snobbishness. Nowhere so much as in America is the hotel a man—or, more particularly, a woman—stays at taken as a kind of public manifesto of his or her social pretensions. There are still left in the land a few hotels dedicated to the service of the old-fashioned, elderly rich

where decorous, hushed service and meals on the old American plan may still be obtained. Only recently a visiting Englishman, who by some strange chance had gone to one of them, asserted that he left because in the whole hotel there was no place where his post-prandial cup of coffee and cigarette might be enjoyed together. In the dining-room he might have his cup of coffee, but he could not smoke. In the lobby he could smoke, but could not be served coffee.

In the newest hotels, of course, ash-receivers are hung over the edge of the bath-tubs, and the general tone is well in advance of even the future, though, of course, women are permitted not to smoke. In such establishments the tone of fashion is very aggravated, and it is curious to notice how nearly impossible it is for many of the patrons to endure life in any hotel less the mode. In the case of the most successfully snobbish of the metropolis caravansaries the situation at the outbreak of the Great War was curious. Although the frock-coated young gentlemen at the desk were hurriedly transformed into Swiss, many of the waiters suddenly became Belgians and the chambermaids irreconcilable Alsatians, the *boche* tone was there and it became one's duty to forsake the hotel. For a brief period it lost a little patronage. Ambassadors of the Al-

lied powers were forced to go elsewhere. And yet, so desperate was the habit of regarding it as the only truly fashionable place to stay that many of the most passionate pro-Ententists remained in spite of everything. It was asserted that the hotel was filled with German spies and that valets from the Wilhelmstrasse went through your luggage regularly every day. One martyred American gentleman was forced to confide the packet of his personal letters from British royalty to the care of a lady who put them in her country safe-deposit vault. And yet, in spite of persecution, it did not occur to him to change hotels.

What does this prove except what passionate devotion a good hotel may inspire in its guests, and, indeed, all the members of the surrounding community? A very prominent New-Yorker got his start in the world when in Chicago he wrote for a local paper a thrilling account of how one bitter January day the clerk at the newest hotel had met the complaint of an Englishman who could not get the water in his morning tub cold enough to be invigorating, by having great blocks of ice placed in it. The story was conceivably not true, since water drawn in mid-winter from Lake Michigan might un-iced well bring a glow to the most vigorous British body, but



all Chicago was delighted at this humorous and fantastic statement of how an American hotel stood ready to provide whatever the guest demanded. It is no bad idea for patriots to rally round the American hotel. It has been one of our country's great contributions to the modern world.

## The High Kingdom of the Movies

ENRAPTURED visitors to our Pacific coast sometimes wonder why a kindly Providence sheds upon that land eternal sunshine. There is, however, but one answer to that question—so that you can shoot the moving pictures there. Of course you can shoot the pictures elsewhere, even in New York, though the weather often shows an incomprehensible disregard of what is really due them. But many other things happen in New York; indeed, one is often in danger of forgetting what is of real importance in the world. This is not satire; it is only the movie point of view, amazing, but quite natural.

They make the pictures at a place called Hollywood—the name may be considered as symbolic, since there are also activities elsewhere. Now Los Angeles, which is the best-known suburb of Hollywood, indeed only a few miles away by the trolley, is rapidly becoming one of the largest cities in the world. We must of course wait for the census to be sure, but it has quite possibly already passed its

rival, San Francisco, and it confidently predicts that it will soon have the most numerous urban population west of the Mississippi. It is not claimed that all these people are in the movies; there must be hundreds of thousands of unfortunate creatures there who have no connection with them. But the pictures are, for all that, the one preëminent industry of the great town; they are its obsession, its sun and moon.

In Los Angeles there are a few cave-dwelling ladies (to borrow a Washingtonian phrase) who, deeply intrenched in West Adams Street, the local Faubourg St.-Germain, still struggle to maintain the idea that one may be Angeleno and yet be scornful, or even ignorant, of the movie world. They are magnificent, but they fight a losing fight.

They gain no support from the distinguished visitors from out of town, who indeed fly to the studios like homing doves. And indeed when real royalty arrives, as nowadays may happen in a republic, they know quite what it is in California *they* want to see. Only recently several thousand amiable and blameless school-children waited in the broiling sun for hours, massed in the form of the stranger's national flag, while some miles away at the world's heart a real king and queen met even more real movie kings and queens, whose

rule knows no boundaries. Blood is indeed thicker than water.

Of course in the social fight against movie people there are naturally dark and desperate stories of dissipation always abroad. If she believed them, no lady, faubourg or otherwise, could fail to react unfavorably. But such legends grow only too easily. We cannot be *quite* sure that the stars give parties so wild that at regular intervals during the long night the local police pass through the rooms and tearfully plead with the hostess to moderate the gayety of the guests—of course no mere policeman would dare give actual orders to a really important movie artist. If such parties take place, those who attend them may be felicitated upon seeing Babylon and Imperial Rome revived. But rigid investigation discloses the fact that many a Hollywood social evening consists merely in the decent yet pleasurable experience of hearing some moving-picture director tell the other guests how great he is. In any case these rumors of an extremely full free life scarcely stem the tide of stellar popularity.

It is in vain that gallant golfers rule that no moving-picture actor shall join their most exclusive club. The movie artists merely found a new club, and with the loose change in their pockets buy expensive land and lay out a new

course. What are trifling changes in the landscape to them? Any day they may see the tangle of a sub-tropical garden modified by the studio landscape specialists so that it becomes the rocky path in the Canadian Northwest where the hero and heroine first meet and love.

It is equally useless for proud and reactionary owners of furnished houses to refuse to let them to lovely little blonde moving-picture queens. All these ladies have to do is to telephone somewhere and give the order, and on some hill near by palaces rise in the next week or month or so. Why should not the builders from the studio do the job in their off time? What is even an imperial villa to men who have perhaps just that afternoon finished Cleopatra's boudoir where soon the lovely star will entice the world? The houses which owners decline to rent to the moving-picture people are pointed out to you as among the historic sights of the region, but even on the "Seeing Hollywood" automobiles they excite only derisive laughter.

It is not being worldly-minded to say that it is absolutely no use trying to treat as lepers those who are rising upon an irresistible tide of success. It is a little as if you stood upon the bank of the Mississippi which was so in flood as to threaten to engulf your home and



Stimulating a vampire with strains from Strauss.





snobbishly said that you did not care to make the acquaintance of a river so common and possibly so wayward.

You may possibly, at a Los Angeles dinner-party, keep the conversation off the pictures while the soup is being served; after that it is difficult. As to the people on the street-cars, in the cafeterias and the hotels, they shamelessly adore the topic. They turn to the movie stars as sunflowers to the sun. From ten thousand thousand altars incense burned to the favorites streams toward the unstained California blue. And the United States postal service might reasonably excuse its breakdown by making a statement as to the number of letters received daily by the adored ones from every quarter of the civilized and uncivilized globe.

A good day will bring by the morning post to a really beloved movie actress as many as eighteen hundred and sixty-seven letters from unknown remote worshipers. And there are times when the chief secretary for personal letters and her corps of undersecretaries and stenographers faint beneath the burden. The letters are infinite in variety; they range from those of simple admiration and gratitude for assuagement of soul, to the definite statement that the writer is leaving East Esopus by the ten-twenty train on Monday and would like to

marry the object of his affections as soon as possible after his arrival by the Santa Fe on Saturday. The colossal scale of the movies may be somewhat guessed at by the fact that there are always at the Los Angeles hotels gentlemen who have just come to marry the leading movie actresses or to reclaim the lovely but evil vamps.

Parenthetically, something more should be said about these letters which are read, answered, and then turned over for study and tabulation by the business-office experts, who are, by this time, more widely learned in human nature than the professors of psychology in our colleges. The "appeal" of each star is reduced to figures, and the results guide the future choice of plays for the protagonist of this correspondence. Some odd things are discovered. It is asserted that a certain famous and virile gentleman is proved by the statistics to be loved chiefly by ladies between forty-two and fifty, and that consequently his scenarios must be constructed especially to delight this age in the sex. Another is the children's darling. Another the ideal of "clean-cut" American youth. It is quite possible that there are figures available which would show what chiefly is the delight of cocaine-users or of superannuated clergymen. The point is that from the peaks of Hollywood

fame one sees the horizon burst, and can view, as in an Einstein straight line, even the Antipodes. If anywhere here the movies may seem to be taken lightly, it is only from incompetence to handle the epic quality which it is so freely admitted they have.

Never before, perhaps, in the world has so strange a social landscape existed as in Hollywood, never a scene so tempting to an ambitious philosopher. In a world where the study of royalty in full bloom is becoming increasingly difficult, one need not repine; the picture people live on an eminence and in a solitude which was unknown to royalty even in its prime. Sovereigns of the old day had power, but from the modern point of view their publicity was not well managed. Indeed, publicity in any real sense has never existed until the movies made their favorites known to the world.

Imagine yourself sojourning in, say, some native village in central New Guinea, where the inhabitants repair from their wattled or otherwise exotically constructed huts in the scantiest attire to the local picture-show; you would find that they had not heard of Alexander the Great or Julius Cæsar; that they knew nothing of Napoleon, George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln; that they conceivably were unaware of Kaiser William, or

even of Mr. Woodrow Wilson; but that every untutored savage of them—man, woman, or child—knew the name and the look of the well-beloved comic of the films. Of this young gentleman, for example, it is now possible to say things that it was never before possible to say of any one. He is the best-known person in the whole world, and he is better known than any one has ever been in the world's whole history.

Another great man is said to have a clause in his contracts that his salary shall be automatically raised so that it shall *always* be larger than that of any actor in the world! Such thoughts are vertiginous!

Not only are the movie artists the best known; they are, it would appear, the most necessary people in the world. The most violent revolutionist does not conceive of any rearrangement of the world, any dictatorship by the proletariat, which will not leave the movie favorites on their thrones. If such unprecedented creatures present any resemblance at all to ordinary human beings, as indeed they do, it can only be explained by the natural and ineradicable niceness of their natures.

You cannot prevent modesty, like a shy violet, from blossoming even under the Hollywood hedges. One adorable goddess cor-

rected an admirer who was asserting that she was the best-known person in the world.

"No," she said, prettily, "I don't think I'm more than the second, or even perhaps the third, best-known person in the world."

True modesty, it must here be passionately protested, has never consisted in ignoring all the facts in the case. Why, in the interests of an obviously false humility, blink at the truth? This new royalty is indeed amazingly democratic.

The court surrounding a movie king or queen is of course informal and untitled except as the masseurs, the scenario-writers, the private valets, maids, and secretaries, the special interviewers for the movie papers, the trainers, the Eastern authors temporarily in captivity, the decorators of sets, the teachers of dancing and rhythmic movements, the professors of swimming and diving, the masters of the kennels and the royal stables, the architects in ordinary, the beauty and scalp specialists, and so forth endlessly, may be considered as having titles. In addition there is, of course, the cloud of unexplained and devoted friends who always gather around a throne and pour forth acquiescence in every gem of thought that falls from the royal lips—"yes-men" they are sometimes termed in the local vernacular. Into this category also fall minor actors and ac-

tresses, and even extra people, all of whom are glad of any chance to learn how to behave when they, too, shall in time become royal—a hope within the reach of all.

However veiled from the general public's eye, the life at court of a king is singularly open to the courtiers. Queens have, of course, always delicately withdrawn into a certain privacy. But for kings there is always the example of *Le Grand Monarque* with his *grands et petits levers du roi*, and Louis XIV publicly putting on his breeches is no more amazing than one of the athletic stars, at the close of the day's work, running, boxing, jumping, and finally being massaged in presence of the full court and to its soft, pleasant, adulatory murmur.

All this, however, it must be repeated, though not taking place exactly in privacy, happens far from the great beating-hearted public. Of course you could not have lived in Versailles without seeing the *Roi Soleil* occasionally flash by in his chariot, and in the streets of the movie cities you catch glimpses of the great as they break the speed limit in their high-powered cars. Even so the inhabitants of California are more blessed than those of any other region of the world. Yet such is the perversity of human nature that a small boy was heard taunting another in the Holly-



wood streets with the fact that, although he might have seen his favorite star often enough in the street, he had never seen him on the screen. Such incidents make you realize how special and curious is the distribution of the good things in life.

Of course minor stars and the smaller fry generally sometimes seem so thick as almost to impede traffic. There are stories, too, which are like those of Haroun-al-Raschid in the romantic night of Bagdad, or some Roman empress bent upon imperial but, so far as may here be asserted, blameless adventure in the Los Angeles of that earlier day. The really great, however, the five or ten or twenty wearers of the purple, do live to some extent behind a shimmering veil of mystery. It may or may not be in their contracts that they shall not dine at restaurants or repair thence to the local theaters; at any rate, they rarely do. Sometimes, indeed, they may grace a first showing of one of their own films, and the arrival and departure need only the traditional crimson carpet to make them perfect. Ordinarily, however, movie stars see movies in the studios at private views, of which one speaks quite as if they were *répétitions générales* at the Comedie Française, or in private theaters at their own palaces where a pleasing survey of the work of other artists may be occasion-



ally enjoyed, or unfavorably criticized, if incompetent.

Of course, for most of us lesser folk the smaller fry are easier to observe. And the sight is both singular and agreeable—agreeable partly because movie-land is, above everything, the land of youth, where success may come overwhelmingly before you are twenty-one. (What terrible thing happens to movie actresses of thirty one cannot imagine, but then few have ever reached that extreme old age.) The fact that the ideal movie actresses are small, dazzlingly blond, and perfectly formed (the type most admired, so it was alleged, by the Prince of Wales), makes them the most delicious little creatures to see. The young men are gallant and handsome, and neither sex shows any hesitancy about making dress fanciful and gay. There is, too, something very piquant about actors and actresses who go to work like other people in the morning, though they return quite unlike the tired business man at his hour.

All the things you have read about in the newspapers do really happen in the Los Angeles and Hollywood hotels. You may come home to lunch and find that they have been shooting a picture in the office and that the company in full finery and paint are

lunching all around your own table. There may be, for example, a bride in white satin and orange blossoms, lovely ladies in evening dress, distinguished old men—Heaven only knows what *they* represent—covered with foreign orders, and once there was—oh, fair and unforgettable memory!—a ravishing small actress, dressed, for some dark reason, as a jockey in pale blue, tight-fitting doeskin breeches, a canary-yellow waistcoat, and a smart blue broadcloth jacket! The contrast to the respectable families from the Middle West who occupied the other tables near by was piquant, and the experience, let us hope, for everybody broadening.

This may seem to be taking the movies lightly, but no one can breathe their atmosphere long and not be profoundly conscious that some tremendous force is stirring here. It is for our generation an almost incredible experience to watch the beginnings and development of a wholly new art. It is no use for gentlemen with a Broadway past to assert, with a pungent oath, that it is not an art, but just the "show business." It is, or is going to be, an art and a great one, and in Hollywood they realize the fact with a kind of vague terror. It is a little as if they had somehow unloosed a great and beautiful beast and were

wondering whether, with their inexperience, their ineptitudes, and their vulgarities, they could long hold and control him.

"We haven't more than scratched the surface yet," they say in Hollywood. It is a cant phrase, and they say it with a light, cynical appreciation of the fact that it is used too much. But they say it uneasily, too, as if some of them, who have not become completely megalomaniac, wonder whether, when the moving picture has come to its full development, it will still be they who ride the whirlwind and direct the storm.

The newness of the movie in this golden land of California is something fabulous. It is only about five years ago that the pioneers, lured by the promise of eternal sunshine, trekked across the plains with their cameras and a few adventurous actors who thought there *might* perhaps be something in the pictures, took barns and such makeshift quarters as studios and began to find out something about the movies. They are now the old aristocratic movie families. Their ancient palaces, built long before 1920, hang upon the hills, and their wives are dripping ancestrally with sables and pearls.

Before the stories are forgotten some one should write the history of this bonanza period. It was like '49 and the rush for Cali-

fornia gold, or like Virginia City when fortunes in Nevada silver-mines were made overnight. In January a man was driving a taxicab, in June he was directing moving pictures. In October actors from the East were borrowing five dollars to pay for hall bedrooms, in the spring they were insisting that their employers give them what are termed "open contracts" in which the salary is delightfully left to be filled in by the actor himself. Almost without knowing it, the movie people had stumbled upon unbelievable deposits of the precious metal. It seemed to be there for any one who chose to pick it up. Salaries became princely. Actresses you had never heard of were guaranteed twenty thousand a year, and directors were counted failures if they fell below a hundred thousand. And a frenzy of spending seized upon every one. Automobiles, pipe-organs in the house, horses, dogs, jewels, swimming-pools, and vintage champagne! If cigars were not lighted with hundred-dollar bills it was only because in the days of an earlier boom Coal Oil Johnny had already done it.

And the extravagance attacked the business end of the business. Economy became something almost ignoble, while wild spending was thought to be not only a pleasure and a mental stimulus to all concerned, but a means of

charming the public. The press was flooded with wild stories, and the cloudburst of gold over Hollywood was seen to break into fine glittering spray of a thousand lovely forms. It is impossible to spend more money on fake "antiques" than was spent in Hollywood's studios, to make uglier rooms as settings or to admire them more. If one ambitious manager reproduced Babylon, the next toyed with Imperial Rome. And if the first hired a thousand supernumerary slaves, his rival bought at once ten times that number. It became the fashion to engage your company at full salary before you had in hand the scenario of your play, and, even when you commenced shooting, to pay salaries for long weeks to some one you needed only for a brief scene at the end. There are now in Hollywood English actors who are, as it were, permanently and irreparably dazed by such procedure, not being able to realize that it all makes up the kind of confused, turbulent, passionate scene which we in America love.

All this is indeed but the natural result of a business becoming fabulously prosperous before any one has had time to learn how to run it. If the movies are poor things, as they sometimes are, it is because they are made by poor people, as they sometimes are. Why not? There are not enough good people to go

round. And the incompetent and vulgar ones, safely intrenched, are not especially anxious to evacuate in favor of some one better.

What has just been set down is, admittedly, *lèse-majesté*, the only offense of that kind universally recognized in our country—Heaven knows what fate awaits the writer of such words. Even under the Espionage Act you may speak ill of anything in America except the movies—they are sacrosanct. Even when, as in this present case, there is in the criticism no wish to exterminate the pictures, only to improve them.

And yet is it not rather in defense of them that one repeats that both pictures and picture people are still experimental? Fortunes come and go. Reputations are made and lost in a day. The land is noisy with the building of new movie theaters; the populace, like starved wolves, wait in lines that would girdle the globe outside the doors. It must be again insisted that all this is without precedent or parallel. Never has any art or alleged art been so known, so widely distributed, so popular. It is no wonder at all that when you are close to the movies you can scarcely see anything else in the world. The strongest head swims at the possibilities of the future. Propaganda, we nowadays believe, builds the

history of nations, and no one can yet guess to what extent the movies, once turned to this service, may mold the very destinies of mankind. Why should the movie magnates stop at the idea of absorbing the theater and the queer old spoken drama? Why not add the magazines and the book trade, for what indeed is written literature but the raw material of scenarios? Publicity might well demand the acquisition of all newspapers. And when the mind and the opinions of the world are well in hand, the step to the assumption of all the functions of organized government is not so great as to require a particularly high-vaulting ambition to achieve it. To those who have not seriously considered what moving pictures are, such talk may seem wild and fantastic. But to a movie magnate in Hollywood it should seem almost sweetly reasonable.

If proof of this frame of mind be needed, the attitude of the magnates toward any censorship of the pictures may be taken as evidence. There was lately trouble with the State of Pennsylvania, which is considered in the East a rather powerful commonwealth. But, from the talk that went on in Hollywood picture circles about its outrageous interference with certain favorite films, you might have thought that Pennsylvania was about to be ignominiously obliterated from the map,



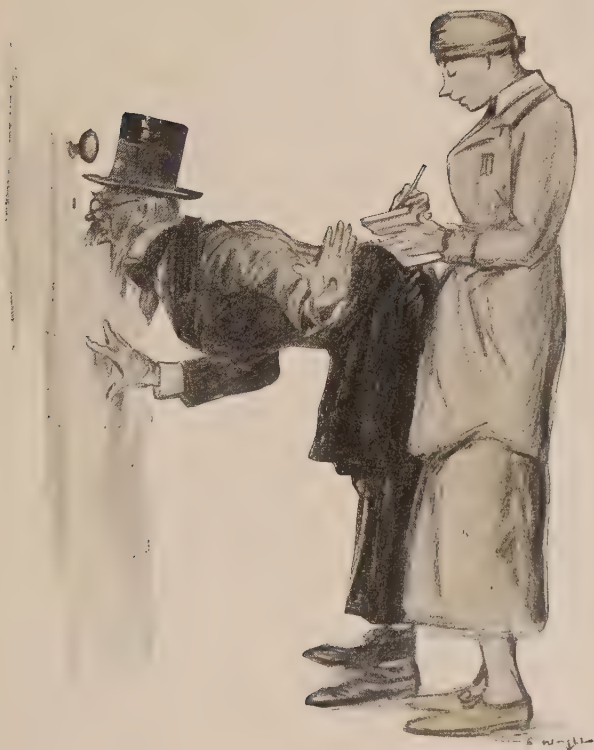
and its territory, like that of a second Poland, partitioned between the surrounding states which had a more wholesome fear in their hearts of meddling with the movies. Any one who fears that the pictures might be going too far in taking over the complete charge of the world must remember that as a nation gets the kind of a government it deserves, so, too, it probably gets its due in its kind of movies.

Since the movies came there has been more "art" in the world than ever before—the most impassioned detractors of the film will at least admit that if the pictures have not all the merits of the arts, they have at least most of their faults. There is, in consequence, more of the famous "artistic temperament" in existence than the world ever had to cope with before. And here, with permission, a theory will be propounded, that temperament, which may well be considered in the figure of a raging lion, deprived of its natural excitements in the immediate presence and applause of an audience, is always in Hollywood hunting for some other prey.

The whole question of how acting is to be achieved with a cold and unresponsive camera taking the place of an infatuated public might possibly be here discussed. Of course there is always a certain public—the director,

the others of the company, and the few outsiders who by hook or crook always manage to be present—yet it is not an adequate audience. And, besides, the conditions of picture-making necessarily permit only a small bit of drama to be done at a time. That is to say there is no long passionate flow of the story, to warm up temperament and sweep the artist emotionally away. For example, suppose they are shooting a great moral-uplift picture to be entitled "The Senses." A beautiful vampire is ready in an evening gown of purple chiffon. Around her middle is bound a small tiger-skin—to indicate that she is not a good woman. In a minute she will be asked to lead astray a fattish, middle-aged fellow who looks like a prosperous broker, but not like a devastator of female hearts. She has nothing to buoy her up, to induce the necessary reprehensible emotion, you may suppose. But when the camera man is ready a small, rather dirty violinist, fully equipped, steals stealthily forward, and almost under the lovely creature's nose draws forth from his instrument the low, thrilling strains which immediately inspire her to have her will of her victim.

Never before have the charms of music, to thrill a savage breast, or to bring tears to the largest, loveliest, forget-me-not blue eyes, been so thoroughly recognized. The sister art is



The reformer is an ever present affliction.



constantly employed, sometimes even at the cost of perfect harmony, as when, side by side in the studio, a bit of Beethoven is being played by a New England ex-school-mistress on a melodeon to stimulate the actors in "Her Fatal Sin" and a jazz tune super-jazzed by a colored quartet so that the hero of a comic may with greater comicality fall into a coal-hole. It is now even said that one director "cutting" a film feels that his temperament makes it essential that he do so to the melody from a string quartet.

Has any hint been given of why the kingdom of the movies is at once so excited and so exciting, why personal behavior is so often wayward and untrammelled, and why Hollywood at moments has all the more agreeable characteristics of a mad-house?

The assuagement of temperament is not always accomplished by music, nor, indeed, certain fond delusions of the romantic to the contrary, by vice. Breaking contracts always helps, and an occasional divorce from time to time keeps one from stagnating. But there are simpler ways, really more original. The famous star who leaves a standing order with one of his secretaries that at five every afternoon all engagements for that evening shall be, as it were, automatically broken, whether he was to figure in them as host or guest, and

something fresh and promising be taken on at six, is only availing himself of his position to gain a sense of liberty and piquant novelty for each night's pleasure which we should all of us like were we as fortunately situated.

Everything is grist that comes to the mill of temperament, if it is no more than having all your meals up-stairs on a tray or wearing sables in August. One does one's best, if it is only the little actress who lets her fellow-guests see that her gentlemen friends always call her at least fifteen times to the telephone during dinner in the hotel dining-room—a matter accomplished by arrangement with a bell-boy if anything goes wrong. There is one great man who would not consider crossing the continent without his private band which plays after dinner in one of his private cars; he is for the moment quenching the fire within his breast. *Chacun à son gout*. Another, a famous comedian, prefers to everything the liquid eloquence of his favorite "yes-men" telling him antiphonally how great he'd be in "Hamlet," if only the damn play were screenable; and legend, so often apocryphal, even says that an agreeable and accomplished monkey who inhabits Hollywood and may generally be seen whenever a scenario contains a good simian part, is himself not averse to the pleasures of being interviewed by some hum-

ble and worshiping writer for a moving-picture paper.

The need to satisfy temperament is not confined merely to actors and actresses. There are also to be assuaged the great proprietors and the great directors who now rival the prima-donnas and the tenors of an earlier day. Is there, we may well ask, any good reason why, when a magnate owner has a big exhibitor's contract to sign, involving millions, he should not be temperamental over it? If he should motor by night into the solitude of the great hills, and there, alone with Nature, comparing her grandeur unfavorably with his own, possess his soul and fix his percentages—why not he as well as another?

It is partly by the development of temperament that directors have forged ahead so amazingly in the movie world. When the pictures started it was known that a certain number of actors and actresses were available; nothing was known about directors. Strategically they were excessively well placed, and they took excellent advantage of their position.

They have a very amusing photographic trick in the pictures. They build, for example, a town, which is to be carried away by a flood or destroyed by an earthquake, in miniature, with the hills a few feet and the houses a few inches high. The camera will



make you believe it is life-size. A director, directing such operations as these, seems to be seen in his right stature, astride the world!

It has been interesting to see how the "featuring" of directors has kept pace and almost outdistanced that of stars. There is indeed much reason for this, and justice. Theirs is a curiously difficult and complicated *métier*, requiring tact, technical skill, administrative ability, and some touch of the creative imagination. And yet it is amazing that even a director should become so great that the advertisements dare declare that a picture of his is

Greater than Words  
Finer than Thoughts  
Deeper than Life

even though it be, as it probably is, wholly unlike all three. Such phrases do, however, give an idea of the dizzy heights to which directors have now climbed. Here, at the top of the world, they would do well to consider not merely their exalted position, but its responsibilities. It is true that they, more than any one else, can make the movie the fine and beautiful thing it might become.

The director in the flesh—often a robustly abundant amount of it—is a magnificent sight. His silk shirt opens upon an often fine throat. His shapely legs are incased in shining Cordo-

van leather gaiters—Heaven knows why. He moves as a creature of another race. If exclusion from the local golf club has seared his soul, outwardly it has only seemed to increase his pride. Fortunate are those, for example, who have seen him at a shipwreck scene where he courageously orders scores of wretched actors and actresses to risk exhaustion, pneumonia, and death by plunging into a boiling sea. Thrice blessed those who are invited for great moments—when in the studio, for example, Cleopatra is to entertain Mark Antony, or the Queen of Sheba is to visit Solomon—and are permitted to view the glittering bejeweled cohorts marshaled, and to see scores of women, each more beautiful than the morn, tremble at their master's slightest word. At such moments the director is at his best, a beautiful yet sinister Byronic figure. Upon his scaffolding throne he sits like Xerxes by that Eastern sea, or perhaps, with his dark, passionate pride, like Lucifer upon one of the peaks of hell. He is indeed to-day the protagonist of the movie drama.

Of course there are authors—one is always in danger of forgetting them. They are a comparatively unimportant race, since in the movies even the best paid of them scarcely earn more than a hundred or a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year. Scenario-writ-

ing is in its infancy, and there is no reason to suppose that in due time the most admirable scenario-wrights will not be developed—indeed, they are developing now, doing their work direct, as it were, for the screen, inventing their own stories and their characters and putting down their own point of view upon the world. The best will doubtless be those reared, as it were, in the studios, to whom the medium seems neither new nor strange. These young people will probably do better things than either superannuated hacks from that queer old speaking stage, or indeed more robust young Broadway playwrights, who are merely lusting for the profits of the films. All are in danger of discouragement; they have moments when the whole business of providing material for the pictures is contemptuously spoken of as the “canning-factory.” And indeed there are moments when ineptitude, banality, and vulgarity seem to be becoming standardized. But the uneasy sense which pervades Hollywood that the public is constantly demanding not only more but better pictures, should be proof that there is sure to be a field some day soon for every one’s best and brightest creations.

The term *authors* is sometimes used to describe those who, instead of writing scenarios, turn out magazine stories, books, or plays for

the speaking stage. And until very recently the chief object of movie activities was to prevent the interference of these "nuts" in the Hollywood change of their work into something rich and strange for the pictures. It may be suspected that the old guard of the film world will fight hard before it will admit these barbarians, who know nothing of "continuity" and such mysteries, into the rich inclosure to loot and pillage. Yet it is a symptom of the uneasiness of these veterans of three or four years' service that you begin to hear talk even among them about getting the author more "into the business."

A slight beginning has of course been made. Authors have been brought in, confined at the studios in pleasant, sunlit cells, with chintz-covered chairs, and pet canary-birds or goldfish, as best pleased them, and there expected to work. It is not quite certain how much they have worked—there were also chintz-covered sofas. At any rate, there is no real proof that they were actually taken behind the veil and permitted to know the mysteries. But something is stirring in the deep bosom of our greatest art; somewhere in that dim future one sees that our greatest authors may be those who have rid themselves of both the spoken and written word.

Who, however, cares for theories who has

journeyed to the high kingdom of the movies and seen that gay, rich, wild, struggling, and striving world? It is a privilege to have seen the human side of royalty; to have learned that they, though triumphant, still dream of higher efforts, better pictures. And, though both cats and authors may look at queens and kings and afterward talk a little banteringly about it all, both must be deeply sensible that to have been received at court is at once a pleasure and an honor. Good luck to Hollywood. It is indeed the capital of the world.

## The American Child

**I**N a recent ingenious and original volume on some eminent figures of the Victorian period the author at the very outset says that the difficulty in writing the history of that time is that we know too much about it.

"Ignorance," he goes on gravely to assure us, "is the first requisite of the historian—ignorance which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits with a placid perfection unattainable by the highest art."

These phrases are hastily borrowed to set at the head of this article, not so much because they shine more brightly than other epigrams with which the modern literary firmament is studded as because they seem to give courage to a celibate author about to put a rash pen to paper for a description of the American child.

The bachelor, unless employed in a medical capacity, knows almost nothing of the birth or extreme infancy of the personage in question. And even of that time when the child begins to prattle, and wit and wisdom cascade from its lips like pearls, the non-father is only an

ill-accredited historian, unless, as Mr. Lytton Strachey says, ignorance be an equipment. It is singular how easy it is to forget stories about other people's children. In these pages can be promised none of those anecdotes of little Herbert or Eva which enrapture the parent and indeed lead him into an emotional morass from which he can never clearly see the whole race of children, the majority of which are inevitably not his own.

Here indeed has been made, almost before it was intended, the plea of the writer's competence. Child-study—a majestic term—is nowadays a leading, perhaps the leading branch of American learning, and in investigating a great subject many workers are desirable. Close observation, such as a parent can give, of the individual specimen is indispensable. But a more disengaged eye will perhaps better trace, through the nation's history, the rise of children to their present eminent position, and judge the processes by which they grasped power. The disinterested celibate may also possibly best judge the tendencies in the opposite direction, toward the resubjugation of the race of children, the ways in which they themselves are made victims of this new wide-spread science of child-culture. The American child is not merely a small individual, straight or curly haired, and



agreeable or disagreeable as the case may be. He is a great and epic figure. On his small, unconscious shoulders he bears the nation's future; and as a cat may look at a queen so long as those anomalous figures decorate the world, so may a man who presumably knows little enough about children still observe them, discreetly and from a respectful distance, and believe that his contribution to the knowledge of them has its small value.

It might, too, be urged that a bachelor, even in the forties, may conceivably like children. But doting parents find it so difficult to believe in even this restrained and temperate affection that the point will not be unduly pressed.

In the early days of the Republic the child, though produced freely, had no great vogue, if one may put it that way. Children were an almost invariable accompaniment of marriage, and that they were generally liked there can be no reasonable doubt. But no one made any great fuss about them. They were sometimes, to quote the language of the period, limbs of Satan, and this, though it distressed, puzzled no one. The doctrine of original sin still prevailed, and affectionate parents resigned themselves to beating the Evil One out of their offspring. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was a maxim on the tenderest parental lips. Religion held out some hope of

retrieving these poor, small lost ones. The early volumes of the admirable *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature* had an astonishing number of entries under the title "Conversion of Children." There were, of course, the incredible Sunday-school stories with painful heroes and heroines, convinced at a tender age of sin, but, on the whole, children appeared very little in literature. Not much was written for them and comparatively little about them. In their social aspect they were, by the grace of God and the discipline of their elders, seen but not heard. A grim picture, every one must admit. And, though under this régime many an unpromising child turned into an admirable grown-up—yet as certainly many a little one of rare gifts and promise was crushed into hopelessness by its harshness.

The pendulum has swung as far the other way now. There was, of course, an intermediate period. Little Eva in Mrs. Stowe's pages is of course a Sunday-school survival, but she was followed by Peck's Bad Boy and then those immortals, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Even Henry James, who at first blush seems out of place in this *galère*, made Daisy Miller's naughty little brother famous. And a tale called *Helen's Babies* was, as late as the early 'seventies of the last century, one of the first phenomenal best-selling successes. It

was the bad child's moment, the era of the *enfant terrible*. Scenting no danger and pleased with its new spirit of tolerance and humanity, the American public warmed this monster in its bosom. The child, which had been an inferior, almost inhuman creature, was now welcomed as an equal and a brother. No one saw in how few years it might become a superior and a master.

Henry James, always oversensitized as to the American child, felt early something ominous about it. In some story of a Europeanized American returning home the hero hears in a hotel, and notes with fear, "the high, firm note of a child." And there is another hotel passage of equal significance which is worth transcribing:

Then there are long corridors defended by gusts of hot air. Down the middle swoops a pale little girl on roller-skates. "Get out of my way!" she shrieks as she passes. She has ribbons on her hair and frills on her dress. She makes the tour of the vast hotel.

Is one mistaken in detecting here the creation of a Frankenstein?

There are many possible reasons for the rise in the value of children. It is always conceivable that it may be explained on purely

economic grounds. As families grow smaller, children, now more rarely produced, come to have a scarcity price put on them in the marketplace of sentiment. We now vie with one another in finding expression for their worth. A poet and essayist who is even more widely read here than in her native England drove the point home when she asserted that, rather than that one child should ever die of hydrophobia, she would exterminate all the millions of dogs, pet and otherwise, of the world! Is it to be wondered that it became increasingly difficult to discipline a race so well thought of?

An English visitor in the middle 'eighties notes with grave consternation the difficulty American parents have in keeping children from swearing and from calling their parents by their given names. It would be hard to say to-day just how general swearing has become among our best children, but in any case we may be sure that if they swear it is considered part of their charm as it is of parrots. As for calling father "Arthur" or "Woopsy," that goes without saying. And old gentlemen who in the early nineteenth century would have belched fire had they been addressed as anything but "Sir" will now fawn upon children, pleading with them to be called "Cousin Howard" or "Scootums." Anything

as formal as the old modes of address seems rigid and chilling, and likely to lose to their elders that approbation by children which is now so essential to any self-respect.

The advance of the child was gradual and insidious. As no one realized the momentous nature of the change, no one noted it. Of course there were outward signs which should have warned. Children's dress, for example, which had been extremely ugly, became pretty and picturesque. The Kate Greenaway books which came with the "art revival" of the 'eighties, made children's clothes delightful and children themselves adorable. The effete continent of Europe began to send its styles. Small dashing sailors began to appear, and ravishing little girls with short socks and bare knees. It was the beginning of the end.

Books about children for children, and, more dangerous, about children for grown-ups, began to appear. Perhaps it was *Little Lord Fauntleroy* who started it. But there was, too, that enchanting volume, *The Golden Age*. The stage played its part, too. Child actresses and actors became an important feature of theatrical life; their bleating voices may still occasionally be detected, though they have grown and now assume maturer rôles. Societies for the protection of children intervened. But the public would not be balked,

Dwarfs were discovered who assumed infantile rôles; closely shaven (twice on matinée days) they even assumed the parts of the unborn children in *The Blue Bird*. Once you begin to see that a little child may lead you, you are its hopeless and infatuated slave. You are, as to the young of the race, on the way to being a confirmed Barrieite or a Maeterlinckian.

Barrie has made us see childhood anew. In the country where his children play the same dew sparkles that lay like diamonds on the grass at the world's dawn. There is no witchery like his, no such tenderness, no such foolish, lovely jokes. We break our hearts for some lost, half-forgotten Arcadia. We hear the bells that ring in some happy city where all saints and angels and little children that have died now are. And this poor world, as we listen to him, would be, so it seems, like Paradise itself, half laughter and half tears, if we could only rightly value its youngest and fairest inhabitants.

Maeterlinck, speaking another language for another civilization, does not, perhaps, ever come so intimately near to us. But he would lead us even closer to the mysteries. In his dim regions, lit by lovely unearthly lights, little children, all blond and shimmering, wait to be born. And he would have us vaguely

apprehend the process by which each small wandering soul seeks out the mother who shall in divine tenderness love it.

If these two writers only are mentioned of a whole school, it is because they are the high priests. There is indeed something of the quality of a new religion in the modern exaltation of the child. Once, when men felt the need of something gentler and more merciful, there grew up in the Church the cult of the Mother of God. To-day, does not the child, sitting on his mother's knee, smile more engagingly, and seem to hint persuasively that in his innocence is the salvation of the world?

Sympathy and liking are duly and sincerely recorded here for anything that can make the world more sensible of the fragile, evanescent beauty of childhood. Yet we have a right to examine even new religions and see how their tenets are to affect our daily lives. If children are human at all it may be dangerous to burn so much incense before them, dangerous alike to them and to those who swing the censers.

Children were once thought well of chiefly because they would grow up to be men and women; nowadays men and women are valued mostly because they were once children. Growing up is only falling from a once proud estate. Children come to us trailing clouds



of glory, and gifted, too—this is the curious point—with some antique instinctive wisdom more cosmic than ours, more directly drawn from the hidden divine fountains of the universe. To adepts of the new cult a child at the breakfast-table consuming its cereal nourishment sits oracularly like the Delphic priestess. A gentleman prominent in national affairs took this view of his blameless little yellow-haired daughter and gravely put to her the problems which were distracting the world.

“I believe so and so,” he would sometimes say, “but Gracie and the chief justice of the Supreme Court think I’m wrong.”

That he often *was* wrong does not, somehow, to one heretical as to childhood’s supreme wisdom, prove that Gracie was as often right. Of course the father’s moderation in allowing Gracie’s inspired words to prove the chief justice rather than himself right must be praised; it is more often the other way round. A street preacher on a soap-box once shouted:

“I say, and God agrees with me—”

Some of the more rapturous child-worshippers seem a little like this. They say, and children agree with them; the coincidence being as sure proof of children’s wisdom as to the soap-box exhorter it was of God’s.

Under the influence of such sentiments edu-

cation has of course been transformed. No one can doubt the harshness and too often the stupidity of the old school system, and no one can help wishing that the acquisition of knowledge might be a pleasure rather than a torment. And yet the object of education is presumably still to educate, its power to amuse being supplementary wholly, and we must deal with the fact that children in our schools do not nowadays much care to work. If things do not suit them, they strike—even New York has already seen this. From Bolshevik Russia comes almost ideal news to children. The scholars there establish the curriculum and dismiss at their pleasure unpopular teachers! They see to their own comfort, too, not only by lengthening the recess-time, but by establishing well-equipped smoking-rooms for the upper classes! Of course this last provision may not seem much to the children of New York and New Jersey, who, according to recent astonishing revelations, are accustomed to securing their supply of cocaine fresh each day from enterprising merchants who are at hand just outside the school gates at the closing-hour. But this is only a measure of what improvements we may expect when American children take the schools in hand.

Even teachers sometimes, in moments of discouragement, admit that children don't work

as hard as they used to and don't learn as much. Is it possible to trace a connection between these two facts? Is work really necessary? Will children, even under the most modern system, ever learn the multiplication table in sheer ecstasy of joy? Foreign children seem to know more than their American confrères; just as grown-up foreigners so often seem better educated than we ourselves are. Is the difficulty that we still make lessons a little irksome, and do not trust enough to that innate excellence of the child, which would doubtless, when the time came, give him knowledge as if by miracle?

There is a singularly pleasant legend (which should be a great favorite with child-worshippers) concerning the offspring of a distinguished American authority on painting. These children, so it is alleged, passed their early years wholly art-free, unmolested by any knowledge of paintings and their value. Their ignorance was abysmal, considering whose children they were. Yet their bodies were healthy and their minds virgin soil, and their parents confident that when the time came—

The time at last did come. When they were fourteen and twelve, respectively, the little boy and girl were, in accordance with their parents' theories, solemnly taken to the

Uffizi Gallery in Florence. There they were placed successively in front of the masterpieces of the painter's art while gently and lucidly, in simple words, it was explained to them why these were great and noble pictures. Their little minds, unsullied by art-knowledge, free from the squint which the sight of bad painting gives, were able to understand at once, to swallow art at a gulp. They returned home, where a hot bath, a wholesome supper, and a night's sound rest invigorated them and prepared them for the morrow's test.

At about eleven in the morning they were taken to the Pitti Gallery and, as it were, loosed. And then—oh, lovely miracle!—like homing doves they flew unerringly to the masterpieces there housed, and proclaimed their merit in choice English such as their own father might have used! This is the kind of a story every one would like to believe. It seems to take some practical advantage of the child's intrinsic superiority to the man, and to dispense with all annoying and expensive study.

Unfortunately for the comfort of children, few parents have the perfect faith of these just noted. The education of children, though transformed, still goes on at terrific tension. But the work now seems to be piled on the mothers rather than on the children. The

most feeble-minded mother who is capable of bearing a child must now be thoroughly familiar with all its reflexes, complexes, and inhibitions. While she is washing the dishes she must prop up the latest volume on prenatal influences against the pan. She must swim out upon a vasty ocean of science and theory. She must search her soul to know whether breakfast contained a safe blending of proteins and vitamins, and she must be sure that the union suit of underwear she has chosen for her darling puts no strain upon the dorsal muscles. With Freud in hand she must read her child's dreams as did priests of old the entrails of the sacrifices, trying to discover whether the pain in the little one's heel is there because his great-grandmother, in girlhood, dreamed of Achilles.

Such labors and such devotion immediately suggest that motherhood has now perhaps become a greater thing than childhood. May it be, after all, that the child's chief value in our American life is that it brings into being the American mother? When you see in Washington the fine building which serves as Headquarters of the National Congress of Mothers, you realize how serious a matter it is to go into the profession of child-bearing.

There is perhaps a good deal of mock heroics in all this talk of the mother sacro-

sanct—peasant women accustomed to plow a field the day after a child is born might well think it a confession of the frailness and cowardice of the modern city-dwelling female. Yet it is well to read over occasionally the pages in which Theodore Roosevelt, never a puling sentimentalist, ennobles and dignifies motherhood. And no one can seriously quarrel with any Better Babies campaign. (The law and practice as to child labor in some parts of the country are crying for the attention of the merciful mothers of America.) Even Malthus, a much-maligned philosopher, did not preach race suicide—only fewer, and so better, children. Indeed, to hand a better world on to a better generation is succinctly the great and holy duty of mankind, and the most bemuddled mother over her scientific volumes, however comic she may be, is never quite a figure of fun.

Nevertheless, it may be permissible to sound a warning. Scientific knowledge on the mother's part must not be allowed to rub the remaining bloom from childhood. The cabbage, even when it begins its career under a bell glass, and has its roots warmed with hot-water pipes within the soil, probably does not much mind being kept from sounding its native field-note wild. The incubator babies, too, at Coney Island or the county fair, do not

concern themselves as yet with the romance and poetry of their rearing. (What a character the incubator baby, free from all sentimental memories of parents, makes for Mr. Bernard Shaw!) But most other modern children, though they be potentates, find life by no means all near-beer and skittles. They are pestered at every step by new theories learned in the child-study course for mothers.

Once upon a time there was a very beautiful little girl with golden locks who lived like a princess with her very modern and scientific father and mother in a large house upon a little hill where many wild strawberries grew. A well-meaning but unscientific grown-up guest (a wretched bachelor, of course) suggested one day, when he happened to be breakfasting alone with the little girl, whom he very much liked, that she and he should spend the morning blissfully gathering the sweet-perfumed little berries which they would eat at lunch with the thick cream which came from the nice cow in the barn. The lovely little girl said, "No, thank you," but her lip trembled. Then the foolish old bachelor again explained and urged his delightful plan, upon which the lovely little girl burst into tears and rushed from the table. The scientific mother a little later explained that by the doctor's orders the lovely little girl had never



in all her life been allowed to eat any uncooked fruit!

Now the doctor may have been right; indeed, an amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the eating of raw fruit by minors may be urgently necessary. But we must learn somehow legitimately to include picking wild berries in the activities of childhood. It is humbly suggested that perhaps if the stewing of the fruit might have occurred on a brick stove which the child had helped build, over leaves and twigs she herself had gathered, something of the old glamour of wild-strawberry adventure might have clung to it still, as the grown-up had remembered it from his own boyhood.

Especially in reference to rural pleasures it is to be hoped that the children of to-day may, when they are older, have some of the romantic memories that their elders now have. Perhaps it is only a trick of advancing age, but the swimming-hole in the brook seems to have a quality which no bathing establishment with a pool and pergola and hot and cold showers can ever have. During last autumn's war thrills one of the great metropolitan newspapers for days filled columns with letters from elderly contributors who debated about the corn-silk cigarettes of their youth, or those they made of the dried leaves of the wild

grape. It seems somehow as if the modern child's country were too well equipped.

Of course in the country nature study pursues the child. A parent or other instructor at his elbow forces him to learn how to tell the wild-flower from the birds—the phrase is by now traditional. And one suspects that, although they provide delightful Indian and cowboy suits, they even want him to learn from some handbook how to play the Sioux brave and from some recommended diagrams how to build a robber's cave. But childhood and the country are an almost invincible combination; it would be hard to ruin them.

It is very pleasant to think of all the summer camps throughout the land where boys, and girls, too, both rich and poor, may learn something of woodcraft and simple living and open-air sleeping. Nothing can be more agreeable than to see a company of Boy Scouts starting off for a week-end hike to the country, where they will camp, and catch and fry their own fish, and perhaps lie on beds of pine needles. On the whole, perhaps the modern way is just as good. And many parts of the country have a moving-picture theater fairly accessible and a soda-water fountain at hand, so that the most exacting child who is not content with the simple pleasures of field and stream may not lack its evening amusement.

There is, however, quite seriously, the definite danger that all this psychic mode of educating may kill every little eccentricity, every little imaginative quality in a child which may be different from the standardized imagination for children as found in Barrie and Maeterlinck and recommended in the mothers' handbooks, and so in the end produce a monotony of personalities. It cannot be too pleasant for a child to be too closely studied, especially when it comes into the odd, delicious, happy, sad days of adolescence—it is not pleasant, when a fellow is embarked upon his first love-affair, to find mother at hand with Chapter XIII of her favorite volume on child-psychology, demanding the most awkward and embarrassing confidences, and studying her son as Fabre might an amorous insect under the microscope. In the old days children were sometimes very unhappy because no one was trying to understand them; they must nowadays be sometimes unhappy because every one is trying to. Privacy, both of person and of thoughts, may be as much their right as ours. We must be careful how we fumble with their souls.

Apprehensive grown-ups must, of course, remember that some of the simplicity and romance of their childhood has necessarily gone forever. No danger can now threaten a child

equal to that of the old high bicycle. No little boy to-day can make it the goal of his ambition to drive the horse-car down the tracks in Main Street; there will soon be children who have never seen a horse. These same nervous people may also safely count on the resistance, conscious and unconscious, of the American child itself. It is amazing how racy of the soil that person is. He reverts to type as do the lower animals or garden flowers. Train him with foreign masters or governesses as you like, he has moments when he snaps back. His speech is an example. He may for a few of the tenderer years, if he is carefully isolated, be master of the low, well-modulated tones of England. But the moment he goes to school his speech gains at once the tang of the streets, or of the gutter if you wish to be emphatic. His nasal tones cut the circumambient air and his R's rasp. It is something stronger than himself, some germ that floats everywhere. Later, at college or after, he may discipline his tongue into the best manner of our own pleasant American language. But he must have sown his linguistic wild oats on the Bowery.

The American child resists manners, too, and sometimes even growing up does not alter this frame of mind. Here in America little boys shake hands and little girls courtesy very

much in the way of animals trained by fear. And no American child will, of its own volition, ever say, "Good morning," or, "How d'ye do?" to any grown-up. Foreign children seem by comparison unnatural little monsters of courtesy. And the Latin languages, elegant and concise, give children speaking them an exaggerated appearance of poise and polish. There was an undue amount of clamor and shouting in a uniformed line of Venetian school-boys on their way to church, and a child of perhaps ten spoke up.

"*La calma, signori!*" he urged, with mock seriousness. "Calmness, gentlemen!"

An acid little girl of six, on the tramcar at Rome with her nurse, passed by a building where huge posters advertised an exhibition of modern painting.

"That wouldn't interest me," remarked nurse.

"It interests others," answered the little girl, coldly.

Perhaps we may be glad that our children are more natural. There is a kind of wildness still in the American soil. And children, who are born conservatives, have a deep-seated love for what is indigenous. They are the custodians of the American note. A little ten-year-old boy at our most fashionable seaside resort comes to mind. He was one

of those millionaire babies, fabled in the Sunday supplements, reared in luxury, domiciled in palaces. And when the Fourth of July came there was a terrific scene (from which he emerged victorious) because the one thing he insisted on doing was to sell a pale, watery lemonade for a cent a glass from a small stand which he was going to erect outside the great gates of his father's place on Bellevue Avenue! Within him deep called to deep; by instinct he knew that he could not rightly grow up as an American unless he had at least once performed all the traditional rights of American boyhood, as poor boys and country boys and slum boys were everywhere performing them.

Has the statement been too long delayed that American children are the finest in the world? They are not to be held responsible for the theories and follies of their elders. They want their own way—naturally, if they can get it. They are not much concerned with their complexes. They probably do not take their art-life very seriously—little girls may enjoy dancing barefoot on the green-sward, but they probably think it silly to speak of it as expressing their personalities. If they have more liberty than they once had, let us merely hope that it makes them happier.

And let us start a modest catalogue of their merits.

To begin with, they are probably the cleanest children in the world. We are the most bathing race since the Romans; we exceed them in the number of tubs if not in the fervor of our ablutions. St. James the Less, so the *Golden Legend* records in his praise, from childhood "never bained" and was by this known to be holy. Even among his fellow-boys he would obtain less recognition now. American children should be the healthiest in the world. They are the most generously fed, and nowhere in the world is the battle more fierce against the germs that threaten them. Latin children may sit up with their parents and make a good meal at nine in the evening, enlivening it with a cup of generous wine. It doesn't seem to hurt them. But our darlings, though we allow them great liberty in manners, are in bed early. They resemble St. James the Less in that he never drank wine, mead, or cider. Their milk is certified and their water boiled. Their food is chosen for them according to articles by popular doctors in the women's magazines. It would be sheer perverseness on their part not to be well.

And we adore them, frankly and without embarrassment. It may safely be predicted



that children will never be nationalized in America, however much their bringing up by government agencies might, scientifically, be to their advantage. Free love, that goal of so many radical futures, may have to be given up just because parents, both men and women, want their children for their own. Of course everywhere in the world there are to-day women who are inclined to wish children were possible without having undignified recourse to a father, so high above all other loves does, with them, the maternal stand. We have lately on the stage seen Madame Nazimova and Miss Marie Doro go insane over this wish of the young girl, not at all to have a husband, but to have children. But American fathers, though little inclined to the miracle of motherless children, value their offspring with a spontaneity and a lack of self-consciousness which in many parts of the earth would be astonishing. In short, no one in America need apologize for making a fool of himself over children.

The American army has given us an engaging proof of this. In all the reports that came from France one of the most charming things to hear was the way our boys had made pals with the French children. The little ones adored these strange, good-natured, good-looking men, who had such a passion for

washing in cold water and smelled so nice. The boys wanted to help the mothers of these children; they were not too proud to offer at once to do "chores" about the house. They made Franco-American friendship a real thing. Individuals, companies, regiments, adopted orphans. Some day they will bring them back to America, and the prettiest, sweetest sentimental comedy will be played as the French boys and girls grow up—*La Fille du Régiment* done over to suit our case.

Even in the occupied districts of Germany our army, which has been able to resist everything else, has found it hard to resist the children. Perhaps little Hans and Gretchen when they grow up may find it fairly easy to think well of us, if they are only allowed to cling to their childhood's memories of a good-looking khaki-clad American boy holding them upon his knee.

At home the war taught us something about our children. They were so sensitive to patriotism! They were so generous of their small funds and their little strength! Thousands of orphans in France have been adopted by school-children here. Across the seas go letters, and, when the postal regulations allow, shoes and clothing, sometimes sewed by little American girls' fingers. And back come gay foreign picture post-cards and words in funny

childish writing that try to express the gratitude of all France. Little stands along our streets where on Saturday afternoon lemonade and rather withered nosegays are sold "for the French orphans" make you smile, and for that instant believe in international friendships and the future of the world.

Whatever his family may be, the child of foreign parents is an American. And he is the great Americanizer. The doctrine he carries home from school he imposes upon them. We may feel sorry that when they might have two languages these foreign children are willing to have only one—American. But the sturdy impulse to be real citizens of the country where they are to live is worth more than the dual ornament of tongues. Little Giovanni, who insists on being called Joe, and Ignaz, who would like to be known as Mike, we should be proud of.

Are we not proud of them—as of all American children? Do we not fill our magazines with jokes made from children's clever sayings, and cover our colored supplements with their engaging doings? (Oh, where in the snows of yester-year wanders Buster Brown?) Has any mere short chapter a chance to say even half that should be said about our darling, the American Child?

## The Society Woman

**I**N treating of the American "Society Woman" we approach a figure epic, yet somehow indefinable. It is difficult to say just what she is, yet impossible to say just what she isn't. She is the glittering figure of triumphant Columbia, incredibly lovely and well dressed, not only devoted passionately to pleasure and the arts, but in the vanguard of a thousand "movements" (for the moment let us be no more precise than this as to which way they move). She is the arbiter of national elegancies and, Heaven knows, she may be the guardian of national destinies. Let us study her with the means at our command.

The documentary evidence first to hand is naturally in the newspapers. The society woman does not shun publicity; she is in it, as the French say, like a fish in water, not so much rejoicing in the medium in which she swims as knowing no other. For the last forty years at least the press has been celebrating her. The newspapers should know, yet their facts seem strangely at variance with those observed at first hand. Even now so-

ciety reporters present the view that the ladies whom they advertise are a race apart, kept in cotton-wool except when they emerge for their purely frivolous activities. We still read this kind of thing in the papers: "Society girl gives up society to study nursing," "Society woman gives up society for landscape gardening," "Society favorite gives up society for community work." But the society woman never gives up anything, except an occasional husband *en passant*. (And even here, in the best circles, a woman does not divorce one husband until she is happily engaged to be married to the next.) Indeed, the life of a society woman is spent in acquisition rather than renunciation. She does not give up anything for nursing or landscape gardening or community work; she merely adds new activities to her old. If she takes to the hospital or the fields or the canteens, "society"—whatever that term as loosely employed by the reporters may mean—is already there or soon will be. She may be more in society than ever, and the cynical may even accuse her of nourishing social ambition at the very heart of her altruism.

The stage, too, is responsible for much misapprehension on this point. The straightforward, virile hero so often wonders whether the bewildering "society girl" whom he loves can ever be willing to "give up society"—the



Women of the highest position feel deeply the beauty of the Bolshevik doctrine.





phrase is by now almost traditional—for his sake. In a well-constructed play she *is* willing, and just previous to being locked in his strong Western arms she usually confesses with an impassioned revulsion that she is “tired of teas.” Except among almost oversophisticated writers “teas” seem the chief, if not the only, dissipation of all society women but the most vampirish and corrupt. Tea indeed, which is even now often described in the quaint nineteenth-century way as “pink,” is the target for incessant satirical shafts. In a recent play of triangular family life, the lover, a dissipated fellow, had the habit of “teaing” on a regular day every week; this, indeed, appeared to be his chief, if not only opportunity of seeing the fair one, and even here the husband, rushing home to the tea-table, as we are asked to suppose fashionable New York husbands do, was often present. Now, as the lover’s attention was wholly *pour le bon motif* as it were, it is only the more unlikely that through the years he would have been put off with tea, and not insisted on lunch or dinner.

Not that society women would not like to have men to tea! Young foreign gentlemen are generally available and often cozy at this hour, but there are never foreigners enough and tea-drinking has, as a matter of brutal

fact, been successfully resisted by almost every native son.

As for "teas" as social functions, every society woman is ready to give them up, even without being importuned to do so by any Western hero. To frequent nothing but "teas" is to confess social failure. "Teas" of course remain a constant and inexpensive pleasure and method of hospitality in the life of those content to be merely artistic, but no society woman worth her salt is content to be *merely* anything.

If the newspapers and the stage fail to reflect faithfully the richly varied pleasure life of the society woman, they do occasionally recognize her unbending and tireless physique. In a comedy exposing the life of Long Island country houses the exhausted male guests had, at about two in the morning, sought sanctuary as they supposed in the sitting-room of one of their number (it is a pleasure to note the richness of equipment which permits each guest parlor, bedroom, and bath), but were there invaded by the charming rollicking hostess and the ladies of the week-end party who brightly insisted upon bridge till dawn. The endurance of society women is beyond belief. As the crowds pour forth from the theaters it is they, clear-eyed and sparkling, who flog their weary male companions to the suppers and the

cabarets. And they are up in the morning as early as the men, regulating their households, giving and receiving invitations, hustling their secretaries, who, not being society women, are sometimes tired, and arranging to cope with home charity, foreign war relief, suffrage, art, and literature, not to speak of massage, hair-dressing, and psychotherapy. If they are ever weary they are too gallant to show it. Only a year or so ago a lady who had dined, gone to the play, supped and danced, insisted at one in the morning on being deposited at the Eagle Hut where, in evening dress, jewels, and full war paint, she proceeded to do her daily duty by cleaning up the canteen. Society women are indeed an imperishable race—it is not probable that in the more lightly working, less fashionable classes any such stamina exists. *Noblesse oblige*; and the high resolve to pursue an exalted career gives courage and strength to meet its demands.

The newspapers, though they may not realize it, make no great account of exclusiveness; they speak always of being a society woman as being really a question only of willingness to take up that career. This has made it possible for journalists to write of "prominent society women" in the remotest, smallest hamlet of the land. It is really, in the language of the day, no more than the conventional

tribute to respectability. In the press it is always a society woman who has six ladies to lunch, the decorations being jonquils, a society woman who organizes the knitting club for Esthonian orphans, and a prominent society woman who is smashed up driving her Ford car over the grade crossing. One must protest against the theory that all such richness of experience is only within the reach of one class, unless indeed that class be so broadened that all pretense of exclusiveness is gone. And though the last decade, including the war period, has dealt hard blows to exclusiveness, yet it must still be recognized as one of the society woman's most sparkling jewels.

Society, of course, has always existed in America, since the stately days of Lady Washington, when really great people were, even in a world made temporarily safe for democracy, given by the courtesy of common speech, unofficial titles indicative of their being society women. Ladies in Philadelphia to-day will tell you that they were brought up in a world more insistent on birth and sixteen quarterings (if that be a heraldic or mathematical possibility) than any society outside the Viennese aristocracy. And, indeed, it may be so. But this had no great effect upon the free republic of the west. It was not until the newspapers all over the country began to exploit New

York society that all America, with an eye on the metropolis, began to organize itself as the sheep and the goats.

Exclusiveness was the contribution of the 'eighties to nation-wide snobbishness. The idea of "The Four Hundred," a published list of those who could be described as really in New York society, was a stroke of genius. And an even greater stroke was the later revision of this list to "The One Hundred and Fifty," thus publicly expelling into outer darkness those who had, by the earlier too great generosity, been made household names throughout the land. Society, indeed, bristled with redoubts, which the ambitious were continually storming. There were subscription dances with lists artificially and heart-breakingly short. There is an incredible passage in the late Ward McAllister's book in which he describes how applicants regularly came to him, with documents to prove their ancestry or their financial standing (or more rarely, but happily, both) and plead humbly for recognition. These were the days when to be seen at a certain great lady's house or in her opera box insured a young man free dinners for the next month. And it is a scant forty years ago that one famous fancy-dress ball of fabulous extravagance landed a great family safely in the fold where they now have the air of hav-

ing originally built the inclosure. For weeks before the fateful evening the whole country waited—even the humble Ohio agriculturist, spitting at the depot store, was fully apprised by his newspaper of all there was at stake. And even he must have experienced at least a relief from strain when it became known that all the best people had gone to the party. Snobbishness was stimulated throughout the whole land.

But these were indeed simple days, the assault of society was a clear military and strategic problem. Now it is much more complicated. Social position is in no one hand to bestow; instead it flies like will-o'-the-wisp before the pursuer. Even ten years ago there were signs of the beginning of the end of exclusiveness. About that time a lady, famous for her wit and independence, asked a young gentleman, then new to New York, to dine. He arrived, as it happened, early, and his hostess confided to him that he must be complimented by being asked to one of her very best parties.

"They tell me," she said, with a detached air but an odd mocking light in her eye, "that there are only five women in New York who are really fashionable. I don't know about that, but at any rate they are all coming to-night!"



The young man glowed with pleasure, and his hostess watched him with amusement. *Ten*, not five, ladies came to dinner, all, to his poor ignorant eye, equally fashionable!

There is, of course, one class in the modern community which feels quite competent to appraise social position, even to award it. These are head waiters, who in the fashionable restaurants herd the elect near the draughty entrance (in what to the unlearned would seem the worst places). A position with waiters is by no means to be despised—a lady constantly seen at the best restaurant tables stands a fair chance of being ultimately welcomed at the best private boards. Of course many ambitious ladies unhappily never advance further than the best head waiters. But the best head waiters—they may be assured—are much more agreeable companions than anything short of the very best diners-out in society.

Social position is truly an elusive sprite. Foreign observers were wont to say that Americans, and, indeed, all the untitled inhabitants of all republics, were never sure of their position. Ladies in America are discovering at last that, failing patents of nobility or any authoritative list of the Four Hundred, one of the best ways of making people believe you have a social position is to behave as if you



had one. We may be thought to cite a case of extreme *aplomb* in the lovely lady who arrived an hour late for a dinner-party on a night when she had not been asked, bringing with her two other guests whom she had taken the liberty of inviting, but whose names she had forgotten! Of course considerable personal charm is needed to carry off this sort of thing, but, even so, indisputable social position only could render it attractive rather than merely careless and rude.

Whatever perturbations may come, a woman of fashion will always be a woman of fashion however Protean her materializations. And yet it is fair to say that the old simple days of blue-book lists of those in society have gone. The war finished a destruction already begun. Society is not so much occupied now with keeping people out as with dragging them in—that is, people who have the appearance, the tastes, and the money, and will consent to live a society life. The portals are not, of course, really left unguarded; there are a great many of what might, perhaps, be termed “limbering up” exercises which candidates are put through. There are parties to be given, committees joined, and money liberally contributed to them. The process, though it seems easier, is really longer than of old, and in the confused state of society there is always,

even when you seem to be in, the agonizing doubt as to whether, after all, you really are in—in the old days a card to Mrs. Blank's ball stuck in your bureau mirror was so much more reassuring.

Reference having been made to liberal contributions, there is perhaps place here for a generous parenthesis on money, its use and abuse. It cannot be too often insisted on, in any serious study of our best people, that money, at least a decade ago, became so plentiful in America, and especially in New York, that it could no longer of itself confer social distinction. Time was when to build a palace and serve nightingales' tongues for dinner was enough. But hostesses became more numerous than worth-while guests. One of the town's very most fashionable women, whose own income was only a scant \$200,000 a year, put it well when she asked, fastidiously:

"Why should we wish to have what every Pittsburgh millionaire can have?"

Ambitious people with money should not, however, unload it too hastily (not, at any rate, just on reading the above paragraph). It has its uses. Society women still feel a warm, pleasant sensation in proximity to a large new fortune. But they want to take the climber's gold on terms consistent with self-respect and dignity.

Ten years ago two ladies—Mrs. Doe and Mrs. Roe, shall we say?—started to mount the New York ladder. Mrs. Doe abounded in palaces and luxury. At her table you ate nothing in season. At her country house the bathrooms contained always eight kinds of mouth-wash in rare decorated bottles, and six kinds of rouge in gold boxes were provided on the dressing-tables. It was occasionally suggested to prominent young women of taste that they might turn interior decorators, for a commission, and do a room or two in one of the palaces. At Christmas-time the leaders of society sometimes discovered a lovely diamond brooch nestling in a bunch of white violets with Mrs. Doe's card—this was generally returned with a statement that the recipient's husband did not permit her to receive gifts, etc.

Mrs. Roe lived in a much smaller house. Her dinners often did not begin with the real Russian caviar. She had no country place. Her entertaining was extremely simple, sometimes just ten or twelve people pigging it in her private car to Palm Beach, where as often as not they themselves paid for their rooms and breakfasts at the hotel. She bestowed no jewels, and yet she is now called by her Christian name (by the way, both ladies under discussion are Christian) by women who have

by now quite forgotten that Mrs. Doe ever tried to know them. And the simple secret is this—that Mrs. Roe subscribed to everybody's charity and uplift movement while Mrs. Doe did not. No society woman could get at Mrs. Doe's money decently, and on any other terms no one wanted it. If the reports that came in of London and Continental antebellum society are true, it is humbly submitted that the moral tale of Mrs. Doe and Mrs. Roe is very much to the credit of our American world of fashion.

Charity and uplift are in the firm grip of society women. The newspapers during the past years of war have duly noted this; every female who enlisted as a Red Cross nurse, organized a relief committee, or hoed a radish-bed was promptly described as a society woman giving up society to do so. There was, of course, a great deal of folly in war work, a certain amount of what is bitterly described sometimes as making carnival on the ruins of civilization. Social ambition led many women on, and doubtless a sheer love of pleasure organized many a dance and bazar for the benefit of the tortured victims of the Hun. When the time comes to write the history of war relief, a certain number of its pages will inevitably be comic relief. It would be pleasant, even now, to tell the story

of the ambitious lady who failed to get on any of the really fashionable war committees, and ultimately made a delightful place for herself by the fortunate discovery of the obscure but deserving race of Uro-Russicks and the immediate organization of a committee for their relief. Such anecdotes prove little. It would be narrow and uncomprehending to deny the realness and vitality of the emotion which set the best-advertised women of our country to work. Perhaps the fact that their gowns came from Paris did heighten their sympathies for France. But, in any case, when the whirlwind of our national indignation rose to its noble and passionate height, these daughters of America were gallantly in movement with it.

The justice, too, must be done them to note the fact that war relief sought them as much as they sought war relief. The American public is the most sensitive in the world to advertisement and, next to actresses (who still, in some hard-shell circles, inspire a vague distrust), society women were the best known. A hard-headed business man, organizing a war committee, knew that he had to have well-known names on his list (and in addition a competent salaried office staff to do the work). He requisitioned a dozen society women in prime condition just as he ordered white paper and

blotters and typewriting machines. It almost seemed as if the oftener a society woman's name appeared on committee lists the more valuable it was. So no one should blame them if self-sacrificing patriots went on every committee that offered.

If it is the fashion to be patriotic it is also in less degree the vogue to be intelligent. This must not be confused with being artistic. For a long time now society women in America have vibrated sensitively at the touch of Art. This has been immensely serviceable in the civilizing of the American social wilderness. When they packed their trunks for the homeward voyage from Europe they put in, every time, a good deal of taste. Society women have learned to deal competently with painting, sculpture, furniture, and all the decorative arts. They have reclaimed our domestic architecture until all over the land the new American "homes" average higher in taste and luxury than the new habitations of any country in the world. They are introducing actors to other people who are not actors, a movement fraught with hope for the future of that race. They entertain artists of every description at their tables. They form a large support for concerts and they are the backbone—as may be seen—of the opera. A long and exquisite passage might, it is obvious, be

written on the curious fact that high social position always goes with a delicate *flair* for art, foreign art preferred. But it was when society women annexed intelligence and public interests that the old-fashioned members of good society saw the beginning of the end.

The suffrage movement, from the moment that it involved the younger leaders, threatened society with the vogue of intelligence. It is nothing now for a woman of fashion to be on a state board of lunacy or a commission for subtropical bacteriological study or a committee for propaganda of American ideals in Portuguese East Africa. Society women feel deeply on educational and sociological questions. Some of them constantly keep on the premises an editor or two of some intellectual weekly or one of the fashionable socialists. Women of the highest position feel deeply the beauty of the Bolshevik doctrine and burst into tears if any one talks of intervention in Russia. When the police break up red flag meetings they are sure to find some society women in the best boxes. It may serve as an encouragement or as a warning to revolutionists, who may take their choice, but it may be prophesied that if soviets are ever set up in America they will be



"Councils of Workmen and Soldiers and Society Women."

This is, of course, the extreme and serious view, as all students of society women must admit. Things have not everywhere gone so far. But the intellect and the war combined have, however, already worked revolutionary changes in the habits and customs of the subject of this article. It is, for example, no longer *de rigueur* to talk all through the opera; in fact, to do so is really old-fashioned. People, if they like, remain till the end with almost no embarrassment; in the old days one of the leaders was alleged to rise in her box precisely at the same hour, no matter what was happening on the stage, and say, with the all too sweet air of one already martyred and sainted for music's sake: "It's half past ten. I should think it would be all right for us to go now."

People even arrive on time for the opera sometimes. How old-fashioned already seem the days when one of the hostesses most highly placed always sat down to dinner on her opera nights at the exact hour when the curtain rose at the Metropolitan, and complained bitterly of the German operas which began at seven forty-five, necessitating dining at that uncomfortable hour!

Intellectual society women are devoted to the theater, too, and often have plans to uplift it. But the feeling unquestionably prevails that a theater which began at nine or nine-thirty could be more easily uplifted. People are willing, indeed, to dine early—say at seven-thirty or seven forty-five if they are going to the play—but somehow even that sacrifice doesn't seem to bring them there for much of the first act.

This picture of society in the ardors and sufferings of a transition period is, however, not meant to imply that ladies live without pleasure. Entertainments were smaller during the war; let us, indeed, freely admit that they were on a higher intellectual and spiritual plane, but fairly continuous. An extremely pretty blonde was heard lately to remark, with an engaging naïveté:

"My husband and I dined at home last night for the first time in months, and to my astonishment I find we have an extremely good cook!"

It is just possible to argue of society that the more it changes the more it is the same thing. It used to be smart to be heavily engaged ahead. Now the fashion has changed. One lovely creature swears that she never settles before 6 P. M. what she is going to do of an evening. But as she is always out it must be

presumed that enough invitations come in about tea-time so that her pleasure is never really curtailed. Every one would prefer to wait till the last moment and accept the best thing that offers; not every one dares take the risk. But our charming reformer genuinely thinks she is taking steps nearer the simple life.

Even when little dinners were for the purpose of talking over war work they were still little dinners and very pleasant. And it seems likely that reconstruction dinners will be equally agreeable—if the supply of men holds out!

Here again, as in any article written on American society during the last decade or two, we touch that eternal and heart-breaking topic, the dearth of men. It is bad enough in ordinary times, but war made it worse. And, as always, foreigners gallantly stepped into the breach. The embassies, the committees, the various high commissions all contributed. Society, when it blazed with anything, blazed with uniforms. And later on, as men who had seen service began to be invalided over here, the supply increased. That many of these young gentlemen were crippled and so totally defenseless was a fact viewed almost with equanimity by women of fashion, determined to fill their opera boxes and their

dinner-tables at the cost even of tears and blood.

Again, as so often in the past, little censorship was exercised upon foreigners—it is a national weakness. One of the notable social successes of the war season in a great Eastern city was a sleek swivel-chair hero in khaki, of whom his compatriots continue darkly to mutter that he was in London a mere clerk of sorts with no social position at all. He could dine out—and would—eight times a night if that were physically possible. And yet his simple début was when a lady, whom a male dinner guest had failed at the eleventh hour, telephoned a peremptory demand to the head of a foreign military mission to conscript and send her some one, something, anything male that would dine, and she would ask no questions beyond inquiring his name when he arrived.

Society women seem indestructible. And yet it would be a rash man who would prophesy that society is as enduring as its elements. Some of these ladies, as has been hinted, mean to head the Revolution that every one is talking about. Others, with a shiver down the spine which is not altogether unpleasant, feel themselves already mounting the tumbrils with a sense of kinship to the French aristocracy of Louis XVI's day—and it may

be guessed that it is the ladies most recently arrived in the sacred inclosure of society who feel most strongly how like the old nobility they are going to be in case of trouble. Others, more prudent, are said to be unearthing the portraits of the honest founders of the family, proletarian grandfathers in cowhide boots and overalls, and hanging them where the mobs can see them at once when they smash in the palace doors. Others—and aren't they, after all, the majority?—mean to confront the future gallantly, cheerfully, and with our characteristic American feeling that somehow the country is all right and that, whatever happens, every citizen has a fair chance to come to the top or the front. And that chance is all the society woman wants.

A great deal of nonsense is talked and written about society women—probably some has been written here. Are they, we had better ask, any better or worse than the nation at large? An American woman at a great party in London was accosted by a foreign gentleman whom she could not seem to remember. Was she, he asked, enjoying the party? She put up her fan to give privacy to an instant of confidential coquetry and said, no, she wasn't; there were too many royalties present. He laughed and passed on, and her horror-stricken companion informed her that

she had spoken in this fashion to a well-known king! This lady, we may be sure, will be quite competent to deal with a new world where there are no royalties. May we not humbly hope that the society woman will persist, that she will somehow manage to be beautiful and well-dressed and that she will continue to do her best for America and to insist that America do its best for her?

THE END.









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